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ADVENTURES
ON THE
COLUMBIA RIVER,
INCLUDING
THE NARRATIVE OF A RESIDENCE
OF SIX YEARS ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF
THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS,
AMONG
VARIOUS TRIBES OF INDIANS
HITHERTO UNKNOWN:
TOGETHER WITH
A JOURNEY ACROSS THE AMERICAN CONTINENT.

BY ROSS COX.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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A
SIX YEARS' RESIDENCE
ON
THE BANKS OF
THE COLUMBIA RIVER,
&c.

CHAPTER I.

**The party attacked by the natives at the Wallah Wallah river
—Two killed—Encamp on an island for safety—Indians demand two white men as a sacrifice—Arrival of a chieftain;
—His speech, and peace restored.**

On the 24th of October we proceeded overland with the produce of the summer's trade to Oakinagan, where, being joined by the people of that district, we embarked for Fort George, at which place we arrived on the 8th of November.

There were few natives at the falls or rapids, and they conducted themselves quietly. We ex-

amined the spot in which we had interred poor *L'Amoureux*, and found it untouched. The low state of the water at this advanced season caused us to make a few *décharges*, which would not have been necessary in the summer: it however enabled us to shoot down the great narrows below the falls without taking out a pack. We remained only a few days at Fort George, from which place we took our departure for the interior on the 18th of November.

We had eight canoes, and our party consisted of Messrs. Keith, Stewart, La Rocque, M'Tavish, M'Donald, M'Millan, M'Kay, M'Kenzie, Montour, and myself. We had fifty-four canoe-men, including six Sandwich islanders. We passed in safety the places where hostility was apprehended; and the day after we had passed the falls, we threw by our leathern armour as no longer necessary, and the men stowed their muskets into long cases, which were placed under the trading goods in the bottom of the canoes.

On arriving a few miles above the entrance of the Wallah Wallah river, at a place about equidistant between that and Lewis River, a number

of canoes filled with natives paddled down on our brigade, apparently without any hostile design. We were on the south side, and advancing slowly with the poles. Mr. Keith was in the first canoe, Mr. Stewart in the second, Messrs. La Rocque and M'Millan in the third, Messrs. M'Donald and M'Kay in the fourth, M'Tavish and I in the fifth, Montour in the sixth, M'Kenzie in the seventh, and Pierre Michel, the interpreter, in the eighth.

The Indians at first asked a little tobacco from Mr. Keith, which he gave them : they then proceeded to Mr. Stewart, who also gave them a small quantity ; after which they dropped down on Messrs. La Rocque and M'Millan, from whose canoe they attempted to take some goods by force, but were repulsed by the men, who struck their hands with the paddles. They next came to M'Donald, and seized a bale of tobacco which was in the forepart of his canoe, which they attempted to take out. At the same time my canoe was stopped, as well as those in the rear, and a determined resolution was evinced to plunder us by force.

We were awkwardly circumstanced : the only

arms at hand were those in the possession of the officers ; and with the exception of paddles, the men had no weapons ready. Anxious to avoid coming to extremities as long as possible, without compromising our character, we endeavoured to keep them in check with the paddles ; but our efforts were unavailing, and some hard blows were given and received. Still we refrained from the *dernier ressort*, and Mr. Keith gave orders not to fire while there was a possibility of preserving the property. The fellow who had seized the bale in M'Donald's canoe was a tall athletic man : he resisted all their entreaties to let it go, and had taken it partly out of the canoe, when M'Kay gave him a severe blow with the butt end of his gun, which obliged him to drop the prize. He instantly placed an arrow in his bow, which he presented at M'Donald ; but the latter coolly stretched forth his brawny arm, seized the arrow, which he broke, and threw into the fellow's face. The savage, enraged at being thus foiled, ordered his canoe to push off, and was just in the act of letting fly another arrow, when M'Kay fired, and hit him in the forehead : he instantly fell ; upon

which two of his companions bent their bows ; but before their arrows had time to wing their flight M'Donald's double-barrelled gun stopped them. He shot one between the eyes, and the ball from the second barrel lodged in the shoulder of the survivor. The moment they fell a shower of arrows was discharged at us ; but owing to the undulating motion of their canoes, as well as ours, we escaped uninjured. Orders were now issued to such as had their arms ready, to fire ; but in a moment our assailants became invisible. After they had discharged their arrows, they had thrown themselves prostrate in their canoes, which, drifting rapidly down the current, were quickly carried beyond the reach of our shot.

We lost no time in putting ashore for the purpose of arming the men, and distributing ammunition. The few Indians who were on our side of the river fled on seeing us land, and those who had gained the opposite bank fired several shots at us ; but, owing to the great distance, their balls fell short. The Columbia at this place was nearly a mile wide ; night was fast approaching, and it was necessary to select a proper place for an en-

to such of our friends as we felt anxious should know our fate, and resolved to sell our lives dearly.

Shortly after day-break a council of war was held; and after some discussion, we determined to quit the island, demand a parley, and offer a certain quantity of goods to appease the relations of the deceased.

The only dissentient to a compromise was our Highland friend M'Donald, whose spirit could not brook the idea of purchasing safety from Indians.

It blew a strong gale during the day, which prevented us from embarking, and constrained us to pass another melancholy night on the island, without wood sufficient to make a solitary fire.

Towards midnight the storm subsided; the sky was dark, and not a star twinkled through the gloomy atmosphere. Mr. Keith commanded the second watch, and I was sitting with him at the extremity of the camp, when we observed a large fire on a hill in a north-west direction. It was immediately answered by one in the opposite point, which was followed by others to the eastward and westward; while the indistinct sounds

of paddles from canoes crossing and recrossing, afforded strong proofs that our enemies by vigilant watching, and constant communication, had determined that we should not escape them in the dark.

Shortly after these threatening indications a flight of ravens passed quietly over our heads, the fluttering of whose wings was scarcely audible. Some of the Canadians were near us, and one of them, named Landreville, in rather a dejected tone, said to his comrades, "My friends, it is useless to hope. Our doom is fixed: to-morrow we shall die." — "*Cher frère*, what do you mean?" eagerly inquired half-a-dozen voices. "Behold yon ravens," he replied; "their appearance by night in times of danger betokens approaching death. I cannot be mistaken. They know our fate, and will hover about us until the arrows of the savages give them a banquet on our blood."

Landreville in other respects was a steady sensible man, but, like his countrymen, deeply imbued with superstitious ideas. Mr. Keith saw the bad impression which these ominous forebodings was likely to produce on the men, and

at once determined to counteract it. This he knew it would have been useless to attempt by reasoning with people whose minds such absurd notions would have closed against conviction, and therefore thought it better to combat their prejudices with their own weapons. "I have no doubt, my friends," said he, "that the appearance of ravens at night portends either death or some great disaster. We believe the same thing in Scotland; the opinion prevails throughout all Europe, and you have inherited it from your French ancestors; but at the same time, I must tell you, that no fatality is ever apprehended, except their appearance is accompanied by croaking; *then* indeed the most direful consequences are likely to follow; but when their flight is calm and tranquil, as we have just witnessed, they are always the harbingers of good news." This well-timed reply completely dissipated their fears, and the poor fellows exclaimed, "You are right, sir, you are right. We believe you, sir; you speak reason. Courage, friends; there's no danger."

The morning of the 1st of December rose cold and bright over the plains of the Columbia, as we prepared to quit our cheerless encampment. The

voyageurs were all assembled by Mr. Keith, who told them that every exertion consistent with reason should be adopted towards effecting an amicable arrangement ; but that it was absolutely necessary to show the savages a bold front, and that while we tendered them the hand of peace, we should make them feel that we were not influenced by the dread of war. He reminded them of the many glorious deeds performed in Canada by their gallant French ancestors, a few hundreds of whom often defeated as many thousand Indians; and concluded by expressing a hope that they would not degenerate from the bravery of their forefathers. They replied by three cheers, and declared themselves ready to obey all his orders.

He next addressed the Sandwich islanders, and asked them, would they fight the bad people, who had attempted to rob us, in case it was necessary ? Their answer was laconic : “ Missi Keit, we kill every man you bid us.” So far all was satisfactory ; and after having examined their muskets, and given each man an additional glass of rum, we embarked, and in a few minutes reached the northern shore, where we landed.

Two men were left in each canoe; and the remainder of the party, amounting to forty-eight, including all the known shades of humanity, ascended the bank. None of the natives were visible, and we remained about half an hour, undecided as to what course we should adopt, when a few mounted Indians made their appearance at some distance. Michel, the interpreter, was sent forward alone, carrying a long pole, to which was attached a white handkerchief, and hailed them several times without obtaining an answer.

They appeared to understand the import of our white flag; and after a little hesitation two of them approached, and demanded to know what we had to say? Michel replied that the white chiefs were anxious to see their chiefs and elders, and to have a "talk" with them on the late disagreeable affair. One of them replied that he would inform his friends, and let us know the result; upon which he and his companion galloped off. They returned in a short time, and stated that the neighbouring chiefs, with the friends and relatives of the men who had been killed, would join us immediately.

In less than half an hour a number of mounted

Indians appeared, preceded by about one hundred and fifty warriors on foot, all well armed with guns, spears, tomahawks, bows, and well furnished quivers. They stopped within about fifty yards of our party. Among them we recognised several of the Wallah Wallahs; but in vain looked for our old friend Tamtappam, their chief: he was absent.

A group of between thirty and forty equally well armed now approached from the interior. Their hair was cut short, as a sign of mourning; their bodies were nearly naked, and besmeared with red paint. This party consisted of the immediate relatives of the deceased; and as they advanced they chanted a death-song, part of which ran as follows:

“ Rest, brothers, rest! You will be avenged. The tears of your widows shall cease to flow, when they behold the blood of your murderers; and your young children shall leap and sing with joy, on seeing their scalps. Rest, brothers, in peace; we shall have blood.”

They took up their position in the centre; and the whole party then formed themselves into an extended crescent. Among them were natives of

the Chimnapum, Yackaman, Sokulk, and Wallah Wallah tribes. Their language is nearly the same; but they are under separate chiefs, and in time of war always unite against the Shoshoné or Snake Indians, a powerful nation, who inhabit the plains to the southward.

From Chili to Athabasca, and from Nootka to the Labrador, there is an indescribable coldness about an American savage that checks familiarity. He is a stranger to our hopes, our fears, our joys, or our sorrows: his eyes are seldom moistened by a tear, or his features relaxed by a smile; and whether he basks beneath a vertical sun on the burning plains of Amazonia, or freezes in eternal winter on the ice-bound shores of the Arctic Ocean, the same piercing black eyes, and stern immobility of countenance, equally set at nought the skill of the physiognomist.

On the present occasion, their painted skin, cut hair, and naked bodies, imparted to their appearance a degree of ferocity from which we boded no good result. They remained stationary for some time, and preserved a profound silence.

Messrs. Keith, Stewart, La Rocque, and the interpreter, at length advanced about mid-way

between both parties unarmed, and demanded to speak with them ; upon which two chiefs, accompanied by six of the mourners, proceeded to join them. Mr. Keith offered them the calumet of peace, which they refused to accept, in a manner at once cold and repulsive.

Michel was thereupon ordered to tell them that, as we had always been on good terms with them, we regretted much that the late unfortunate circumstance had occurred to disturb our friendly intercourse ; but that as we were anxious to restore harmony, and to forget what had passed, we were now willing to compensate the relations of the deceased for the loss they had sustained.

They inquired what kind of compensation was intended ; and on being informed that it consisted of two suits of chiefs' clothes, with blankets, tobacco, and ornaments for the women, &c., it was indignantly refused ; and their spokesman stated that no discussion could be entered into until two white men (one of whom should be the big red-headed chief) were delivered to them to be sacrificed, according to their law, to the spirits of the departed warriors.

Every eye turned on M'Donald, who, on hearing the demand, "grinned horribly a ghastly smile;" and who, but for our interposition, would on the spot have chastised the insolence of the speaker. The men were horrified, and "fear and trembling" became visible in their countenances, until Mr. Keith, who had observed these symptoms of terror, promptly restored their confidence, by telling them that such an ignominious demand should never be complied with.

He then addressed the Indians in a calm, firm voice, and told them that no consideration whatever should induce him to deliver a white man to their vengeance; that they had been the original aggressors, and in their unjustifiable attempt to seize by force our property, the deceased had lost their lives: that he was willing to believe the attack was unpremeditated, and under that impression he had made the offer of compensation. He assured them that he preferred their friendship to their enmity; but that, if unfortunately they were not actuated by the same feelings, the white men would not, however deeply they might lament it, shrink from the contest. At the same time he

reminded them of our superiority in arms and ammunition ; and that for every man belonging to our party who might fall, ten of their friends at least would suffer ; and concluded by requesting them calmly to weigh and consider all these matters, and to bear in recollection, that upon the result of their deliberation would in a great measure depend whether white men would remain in their country, or quit it for ever.

The interpreter having repeated the above, a violent debate took place among the principal natives. One party advised the demand for the two white men to be withdrawn, and to ask in their place a greater quantity of goods and ammunition ; while the other, which was by far the most numerous, and to which all the relatives of the deceased belonged, opposed all compromise, unaccompanied by the delivery of the victims.

The arguments and threats of the latter gradually thinned the ranks of the more moderate ; and Michel told Mr. Keith that he was afraid an accommodation was impossible. Orders were thereupon issued to prepare for action, and the

men were told, when they received from Mr. Keith the signal, to be certain that each shot should tell.

In the mean time a number of the natives had withdrawn some distance from the scene of deliberation, and from their fierce and threatening looks, joined to occasional whispers, we momentarily expected they would commence an attack.

A few of their speakers still lingered, anxious for peace; but their feeble efforts were unavailing when opposed to the more powerful influence of the hostile party, who repeatedly called on them to retire, and allow the white men to proceed on their journey as well as they could. All but two chiefs and an elderly man, who had taken an active part in the debate, obeyed the call, and they remained for some time apparently undecided what course to adopt.

From this group our eyes glanced to an extended line of the enemy who were forming behind them; and from their motions it became evident that their intention was to outflank us. We therefore changed our position, and formed

our men into single files, each man about three feet from his comrade. The friendly natives began to fall back slowly towards their companions, most of whom had already concealed themselves behind large stones, tufts of worm-wood, and furze bushes, from which they could have taken a more deadly aim ; and Messrs. Keith and Stewart, who had now abandoned all hopes of an amicable termination, called for their arms.

An awful pause ensued, when our attention was arrested by the loud tramping of horses, and immediately after twelve mounted warriors dashed into the space between the two parties, where they halted, and dismounted. They were headed by a young chief, of fine figure, who instantly ran up to Mr. Keith, to whom he presented his hand in the most friendly manner, which example was followed by his companions. He then commanded our enemies to quit their places of concealment, and to appear before him. His orders were promptly obeyed ; and having made himself acquainted with the circumstances that led to the deaths of the two Indians, and our efforts towards effecting a reconciliation, he addressed them in a

speech of considerable length, of which the following is a brief sketch :

“ Friends and relations ! Three snows have only passed over our heads since we were a poor miserable people. Our enemies the Shoshones, during the summer, stole our horses, by which we were prevented from hunting, and drove us from the banks of the river, so that we could not get fish. In winter, they burned our lodges by night ; they killed our relations ; they treated our wives and daughters like dogs, and left us either to die from cold or starvation, or become their slaves.

“ They were numerous and powerful ; we were few, and weak. Our hearts were as the hearts of little children : we could not fight like warriors, and were driven like deer about the plains. When the thunders rolled, and the rains poured, we had no spot in which we could seek a shelter ; no place, save the rocks, whereon we could lay our heads. Is such the case to-day ? No, my relations ! it is not. We have driven the Shoshones from our hunting-grounds, on which they dare not now appear, and have regained possession of the lands of our fathers, in which they and their

fathers' fathers lie buried. We have horses and provisions in abundance, and can sleep unmolested with our wives and our children without dreading the midnight attacks of our enemies. Our hearts are great within us, and we are *now a nation!*

“ Who then, my friends, have produced this change? The white men. In exchange for our horses and for our furs, they gave us guns and ammunition; then we became strong; we killed many of our enemies, and forced them to fly from our lands. And are we to treat those who have been the cause of this happy change with ingratitude? Never! Never! The white people have never robbed us; and, I ask, why should we attempt to rob them? It was bad, very bad!—and they were right in killing the robbers.” Here symptoms of impatience and dissatisfaction became manifest among a group consisting chiefly of the relations of the deceased; on observing which, he continued in a louder tone: “ Yes! I say they acted right in killing the robbers; and who among you will *dare* to contradict *me*?

“ You know well my father was killed by the

enemy, when you all deserted him like cowards ; and, while the Great Master of Life spares me, no hostile foot shall again be set on our lands. I know you all ; and I know that those who are afraid of their bodies in battle are thieves when they are out of it ; but the warrior of the strong arm and the great heart will never rob a friend." After a short pause, he resumed : " My friends, the white men are brave, and belong to a great nation. They are many moons crossing the great lake in coming from their own country to serve us. If you were foolish enough to attack them, they would kill a great many of you ; but suppose you should succeed in destroying all that are now present, what would be the consequence ? A greater number would come next year to revenge the death of their relations, and they would annihilate our tribe ; or should not that happen, their friends at home, on hearing of their deaths, would say we were a bad and a wicked people, and white men would never more come among us. We should then be reduced to our former state of misery and persecution ; our ammunition would be quickly expended ; our guns would become

useless, and we should again be driven from our lands, and the lands of our fathers, to wander like deer and wolves in the midst of the woods and plains. I therefore say the white men *must* not be injured ! They have offered you compensation for the loss of your friends : take it : but, if you should refuse, I tell you to your faces that I will join them with my own band of warriors ; and should one white man fall by the arrow of an Indian, *that* Indian, if he were my brother, with all his family, shall become victims to my vengeance." Then, raising his voice, he called out, " Let the Wallah Wallahs, and all who love me, and are fond of the white men, come forth and smoke the pipe of peace !" Upwards of one hundred of our late adversaries obeyed the call, and separated themselves from their allies. The harangue of the youthful chieftain silenced all opposition. The above is but a faint outline of the arguments he made use of, for he spoke upwards of two hours ; and Michel confessed himself unable to translate a great portion of his language, particularly when he soared into the wild flights of metaphor, so common among Indians. His deli-

very was impassioned ; and his action, although sometimes violent, was generally bold, graceful, and energetic. Our admiration at the time knew no bounds ; and the orators of Greece or Rome, when compared with him, dwindled in our estimation into insignificance.

Through this chief's mediation, the various claimants were in a short time fully satisfied, without the flaming scalp of our Highland hero ; after which a circle was formed by our people and the Indians indiscriminately : the white and red chiefs occupied the centre, and our return to friendship was ratified by each individual in rotation taking an amicable whiff from the peace-cementing calumet.

The chieftain whose timely arrival had rescued us from impending destruction was called "Morning Star." His age did not exceed twenty-five years. His father had been a chief of great bravery and influence, and had been killed in battle by the Shoshones a few years before. He was succeeded by Morning Star, who, notwithstanding his youth, had performed prodigies of valour. Nineteen scalps decorated the neck of his war

horse, the owners of which had been all killed in battle by himself to appease the spirit of his deceased father. He wished to increase the number of his victims to twenty; but the terror inspired by his name, joined to the superiority which his tribe derived from the use of fire-arms, prevented him from making up the desired complement, by banishing the enemy from the banks of the Columbia.*

His handsome features, eagle glance, noble bearing, and majestic person, stamped him one of Nature's own aristocracy; while his bravery in the field, joined to his wisdom in their councils, commanded alike the involuntary homage of the young, and the respect of the old.

We gave the man who had been wounded in the shoulder a chief's coat; and to the relations of the men who were killed we gave two coats, two blankets, two fathoms of cloth, two spears, forty bullets and powder, with a quantity of trinkets, and two small kettles for their widows. We also distributed nearly half a bale of tobacco among all

* The Indians consider the attainment of twenty scalps as the summit of a warrior's glory.

present, and our youthful deliverer was presented by Mr. Keith with a handsome fowling-piece, and some other valuable articles.

Four men were then ordered to each canoe, and they proceeded on with the poles; while the remainder, with the passengers, followed by land. We were mixed pell-mell with the natives for several miles: the ground was covered with large stones, small willows, and prickly pears; and had they been inclined to break the solemn compact into which they had entered, they could have destroyed us with the utmost facility.

At dusk we bade farewell to the friendly chieftain and his companions, and crossed to the south side, where we encamped, a few miles above Lewis River, and spent the night in tranquillity.

It may be imagined by some that the part we acted in the foregoing transaction betrayed too great an anxiety for self-preservation; but when it is recollected that we were several hundred miles from any assistance, with a deep and rapid river to ascend by the tedious and laborious process of poling, and that the desultory Cossack mode of fighting in use among the Indians, par-

ticularly the horsemen; would have cut us off in piece-meal ere we had advanced three days, it will be seen that, under the circumstances, we could not have acted otherwise.

We reached Oakinagan without further interruption on the 12th of December, at which place we remained a few days, to recruit the men, and prepare for the land journey with the horses.

CHAPTER II.

Author and party lost in a snow-storm—Curious instance of mental abstraction—Poor Ponto—Arrive at Spokane House—A marriage—Great ravine—Agates—Hot-springs—Kitchen-garden—Indian manner of hunting the deer—Method adopted by the wolves for the same purpose—Horse-racing—Great heat.

ON the 13th of December the Spokane brigade to which I was attached took its departure from Oakinagan. The party consisted, besides, of Messrs. Stewart, M'Tavish, M'Millan, and Montour; with twenty-one Canadians, and four Sandwich islanders. We had twenty-six loaded horses; and in addition to our ordinary stock of provisions, we purchased forty dogs from the natives at Oakinagan, which were killed, after we had crossed the river, and formed part of the loading.

The cold was intense, and the ground covered with ten to twelve inches of snow. This necessarily impeded our progress, and prevented us from advancing more than twelve miles a day.

On the 16th, which was the fourth day of our journey, it snowed incessantly. The line of march was long and straggling, and those in front were several miles in advance of the rear division, of which I had charge with M'Tavish. We had eight loaded horses, with four Canadians, and two Sandwich islanders.

Towards evening a heavy storm arose from the north-east, which added to the desolation by which we were surrounded; while the chilling monotony of the wide and extended plains was partially varied by immense masses of drifting snow, which, like the fitful vapour that so often enshrouds our northern mountains, occasionally concealed from our view the cheerless extent of the wintry horizon. On the approach of darkness the violence of the storm subsided; but it was followed by one of those calm, clear, freezing nights so common in the interior of America, and from the death-benumbing influence of which it

is nearly impossible to avoid that sleep from which many an unfortunate wanderer never awakens. We were now completely bewildered ; all traces of the path had been destroyed by the drift ; the cold became every instant more painfully intense, and

Horsemen and horse confessed the bitter pang.

Three of the poor animals having at length given up, we were reluctantly obliged to stop and unload them ; and after searching, in vain, for wood to make a fire, we were compelled to make a large excavation in the snow, in which we resolved to pass the night.

The horses which carried our provisions and blankets were ahead, and we fired several shots in the hope of obtaining relief, but without success. M'Tavish and I, however, fortunately obtained a blanket from one of the men, with which, and some of the saddle-cloths, we contrived to guard against the effects of the piercing cold during the night.

We arose with the first dawn of morning, and prepared to renew our march ; but on mustering

the horses, we found one of them dead, and the two Sandwich islanders dreadfully frost-bitten. To add to our distress, M'Tavish and I had omitted the wise precaution of placing our moccasins under our bodies, (the warmth of which would have preserved them from being congealed,) in consequence of which we found them, on awakening, frozen as hard as clogs. All our endeavours to soften them by puffing, rubbing, &c. were unavailing, and we were ultimately obliged to have recourse to an extraordinary process, which produced the desired effect. After reloading, we resumed our march; which, owing to the depth and hardness of the snow, was painfully tedious. We had not advanced more than three miles when I missed my fowling-piece; and imagining that I had left it at the place where we had passed the night, I returned to look for it; but on arriving at the spot, I was much annoyed to find the object of my search lying across my arms! To account for this instance of mental abstraction, it is necessary to remember the disagreeable situation in which I was placed;—in charge of a party who had lost itself in a trackless wilderness of snow, and unable

to discover any vestiges of its companions; two of the number disabled from walking, and both men and horses almost exhausted from cold and want of nourishment; in addition to which, I had been accustomed for some days previously to carry my fowling-piece over the left shoulder, from which I suddenly missed the weight, and, without mentioning the circumstance to any of the men, turned back on my fool's errand.

Shortly after rejoining the party we came in view of a cluster of small trees, from the centre of which arose large volumes of friendly vapour. Here we found Messrs. Stewart and M'Millan with the remainder of the brigade, comfortably seated round a cheering fire, partaking of a plentiful breakfast. We hastened to join them, and quickly despatched part of a hind-quarter and a few ribs of roasted dog.

Mr. Stewart had a beautiful English water-spaniel, called Ponto. After breakfast he asked M'Tavish how he liked his fare; to which the latter replied that he thought it was excellent. "And pray, my dear Alick," said Stewart, "do you know what you have just been eating?"

“Not exactly,” replied he; “I liked the meat so well that I never thought of asking its name; but I suppose it is one of the wild sheep that I hear you have in these parts.”—“No indeed,” said Stewart: “finding ourselves short of provisions, we were obliged to kill Ponto, on part of which you have made so hearty a breakfast.”—“Poor Ponto!” ejaculated the philosophical Highlander: “I am sorry for him; but it cannot now be helped.” Ponto was a fine animal, full of vivacity, and had become a general favourite. I could not account for his death, seeing there was no necessity to justify the murder of a *civilised* dog, while several of those which had been purchased at Oakinagan still remained untouched. On inquiring the reason, I was told that in consequence of his being in excellent condition, he was deemed a fit dish *pour la table d'un bourgeois*.* This was by no means satisfactory, as I observed at the men’s messes several prime pieces of the native dogs, which I thought ought to have satisfied people more fastidious than we had a right to be on such an occa-

* The Canadians call every proprietor *un bourgeois*.

sion: besides, I would have preferred picking the bones of the most *maigre* of the Indian breed, to the plumpest of our own faithful companions. Their keen eye, sharp nose, and pointed upright ear, proclaim their wolfish origin, and fail to enlist our sympathies in their behalf; in consequence of which our repugnance to eat them in periods of necessity is considerably diminished.

We rested at this encampment the remainder of the day to refresh the horses, and in the evening I was highly delighted at again seeing the animated figure of poor Ponto as lively and playful as ever. He had not been injured, and the melancholy story of his death, &c. was a pure invention of the "old one's" to work on our juvenile sympathies.

From hence to Spokane we had a tedious and miserable march of seven days in deep snow, in the course of which we lost five horses; and of those which survived the journey, several perished during the winter.

I remained at Spokane in company with Messrs. Stewart and M'Tavish, and passed rather an agreeable winter. The deer were not so numerous as

in former seasons, and we chiefly subsisted on horses. Towards the latter end of January carp became plentiful in Spokane river, and about a month later the trout-fishing commenced. We took large quantities of both, which afforded us excellent amusement; and from that period until late in the spring, we generally breakfasted on fish and dined on horse.

In the course of the winter an incident occurred which threatened at the time to interrupt the harmony that had previously existed between our people and the Spokane Indians. One of our younger clerks, having become tired of celibacy, resolved to take a wife; and as none of the Columbian half-breeds had attained a sufficiently mature age, he was necessitated to make his selection from the Spokane tribe. He therefore requested the interpreter to make an inquiry in the village, and ascertain whether any unappropriated comely young woman was willing to become the partner of a juvenile chief. A pretty-looking damsel, about seventeen years of age, immediately became a candidate for the prize. As her father had died some years before, she was

under the guardianship of her mother, who, with her brother, settled the terms of the negotiation. Blankets and kettles were presented to her principal relations ; while beads, hawk-bells, &c. were distributed among the remaining kindred. About nine o'clock at night the bride was conducted to the fort gate by her mother, and, after an apathetic parting, she was consigned to the care of one of the men's wives, called "the scourer," conversant in such affairs, who had her head and body thoroughly cleansed from all the Indian paint and grease with which they had been saturated. After this purification she was handed over to the dressmaker, who instantly discharged her leathern chemise, and supplied its place by more appropriate clothing ; and the following morning, when she appeared in her new habiliments, we thought her one of the most engaging females that we had previously seen of the Spokan nation.

Matters rolled on pleasantly enough for a few days, and the youthful couple appeared mutually enamoured of each other; but a "little week" had scarcely passed over their heads when, one day

about two o'clock, a number of young warriors well mounted galloped into the court-yard of the fort armed at all points. Their appearance was so unusual, and unlike the general manner of the Spokan nation, that we were at a loss to account for it, and vague suspicions of treachery began to flit across our imaginations ; but the mystery was shortly cleared up. The bride, on perceiving the foremost horseman of the band enter the court, instantly fled into an adjoining store, in which she concealed herself ; while he and his associates dismounted, and demanded to speak with the principal white chief, at the same time requesting the other chiefs would also appear. His wishes having been complied with, he addressed us in substance to the following effect : “ Three snows have passed away since the white men came from their own country to live among the Spokans. When the Evil Spirit thought proper to distress the white people by covering the waters of the rivers with ice, so that they could not catch any fish, and sent snow all over the mountains and the plains, by means whereof their horses were nearly destroyed by the wolves,—when their own

hunters in fact could not find an animal, did the Spokans take advantage of their afflictions? Did they rob them of their horses like Sinapoil dogs? Did they say, The white men are now poor and starving; they are a great distance from their own country and from any assistance, and we can easily take all their goods from them, and send them away naked and hungry? No! we never spoke or even thought of such bad things. The white men came amongst us with confidence, and our hearts were glad to see them; they paid us for our fish, for our meat, and for our furs. We thought they were all good people, and in particular their chiefs; but I find we were wrong in so thinking." Here he paused for a short period; after which he thus recommenced: "My relations and myself left our village some days ago for the purpose of hunting. We returned home this morning. Their wives and their children leaped with joy to meet them, and all their hearts were glad but mine. I went to my hut, and called on my wife to come forth; but she did not appear. I was sorrowful and hungry, and went into my brother's hut, where I was told that she had gone

away, and had become the wife of a white chief. She is now in your house. I come, therefore, white men, to demand justice. I first require that my wife be delivered up to me. She has acted like a dog, and I shall live no more with her; but I shall punish her as she deserves. And in the next place, I expect, as you have been the cause of my losing her, that you will give me ample compensation for her loss." Our interpreter immediately explained to the Indian that the girl's relatives were the cause of the trick that had been played on him; and added, that had our friend been aware of her having been a married woman, he never would have thought of making her his wife. That he was willing to give him reasonable compensation for her loss; but that she should not be delivered to him. except he undertook not to injure her. He refused to make any promise, and still insisted on her restitution; but as we had reason to fear that her life would have been sacrificed, we refused to comply. The old chief next addressed him for some time; the result of which was, that he agreed to accept of a gun, one hundred rounds of ammunition, three blan-

kets, two kettles, a spear, a dagger, ten fathoms of tobacco, with a quantity of smaller articles, and to leave his frail helpmate in quiet possession of her pale-faced spouse, promising never more to think of her, or do her any harm. Exorbitant as these terms were, it was judged advisable to accede to them rather than disturb the good feeling that had hitherto subsisted between us. After we had delivered the above articles to him, we all smoked the calumet; on perceiving which, the fugitive, knowing that it was the ratification of peace, emerged from her place of concealment, and boldly walked past her late lord. She caught his eye for a moment; but no sign of recognition appeared; and neither anger nor regret seemed to disturb the natural serenity of his cold and swarthy countenance.

Shortly after the arrival of the parties from the Cootonais and Flat-heads, we took our departure for the sea; and having joined the gentlemen at Oakinagan, proceeded together, and arrived without accident on the 3d of April at Fort George. Here we found a handsome brig belonging to the Company, which had arrived some time before,

well loaded with articles necessary both for the interior and coasting trade.

We remained only a fortnight at the fort, which we again left on the 16th of April for the interior. We saw few Indians on the Columbia until we reached the Wallah Wallah river, at which we stopped half a day to purchase horses. We recognised several of the party who had attacked us the preceding autumn, particularly the relatives of the Indians who had been killed, and who were easily distinguished by their short cropped hair. They came however among us unarmed, and all recollection of that unpleasant affair seemed to have vanished from their memories.

About forty miles above Lewis River Messrs. Stewart, M'Millan, and I, with three men, quit-
ted the canoes to proceed overland to Spokan House. During this journey, which occupied five or six days, we did not meet a single native; and with the exception of a few stunted red cedar trees, and some juniper birch and willow, the country was divested of wood. Early on the morning of the second day we entered a remark-

able ravine, with high, bold, and rocky sides, through which we rode upwards of twenty miles, when we were obliged to leave it in order to follow our direct course. The soil in this ravine is a fine whitish-coloured clay, firm and hard. There is but little vegetation, except on the sides, where clusters of willow and choke-cherry are occasionally met with. While we rode through it we passed several small lakes, round the shores of which I picked up some very fine pebbles of the agate species, extremely hard, and possessing great delicacy and variety of shading. The banks of the Columbia, from the falls up to Lewis River, abound with pebbles of the same description; some of which I brought home, and had cut. They take a beautiful polish, and in the opinion of lapidaries far exceed the cornelian in value.

It is a curious circumstance that we observed no rattlesnakes in this valley; and we subsequently learned from the Indians that they never saw any; although those reptiles are very numerous in the plains on each side. The natives were unable to assign any cause for this; and, except

it be in the peculiarity of the soil, we were equally at a loss to account for it.

The following day we passed two warm springs, one of which was so hot, that in a short time water in a saucepan might be easily boiled over it. They were both highly sulphuric ; but we had not time, nor indeed were we prepared to analyse their properties. The soil in their immediate vicinity was firm white clay, and the grass quite brown.

On leaving the canoes we expected to have reached Spokane on the third day ; but in consequence of having no guide, joined to the difficulty of finding water, we took double the time on which we had calculated. Our provisions had failed ; and we were about killing one of our jaded horses, when we came in sight of a few lean deer, two of which we shot. This supply brought us to Spokane House, which place we reached on the 12th of May. The party with the trading goods arrived a few days after from Oakinagan.

I passed the summer at Spokane with the gentlemen already mentioned, in addition to Messrs. Mackenzie and Montour, in as agreeable a man-

ner as men possibly could in such a country. Our kitchen-garden now began to assume a thriving appearance, and, in addition to a fine crop of potatoes, we reared a quantity of other excellent esculents. The soil was deep and rich ; and a few melons and cucumbers, which we had put down, thrived admirably. The Indians, who at first would not touch any thing which we planted, began at length to have such a relish for the produce of the garden, that we were obliged to have sentinels on the watch to prevent their continual trespasses. We offered some of them potatoes to plant, and pointed out the good effects that would result from their cultivation ; but they were too thoughtless and improvident to follow our advice. We strongly impressed on their minds that if the system was generally adopted it would prevent the recurrence of famine, to which they were subject ; but to this they replied, that it would interfere with their hunting and fishing, and prevent their women from collecting their own country fruits and roots in the autumn, and thereby render them lazy. All our arguments

were unavailing, and we were obliged to allow them to continue in their own course.

During the summer we made several excursions of from one to three weeks' duration to the neighbouring friendly tribes, for the purpose of obtaining a more accurate knowledge of their respective lands. Of the information thus obtained I shall have to speak hereafter. In some of these journeys we had to cross the great ravine already mentioned. It is computed to be about eighty miles in length, and presents all along the same rocky and precipitous sides. The pathways are so steep and dangerous, that even Indians in passing them are obliged to dismount, and loaded horses must be partly lightened. Some of the horses by missing their footing have been killed, and many severely injured, in descending these precipices. The bottom throughout consists of the same firm white soil, interspersed with small lakes. Several bold insulated rocks are scattered here and there throughout the ravine, some of which exceed a quarter of a mile in circumference, and are partially clothed with choke-cherry and other inferior kinds of vegetation.

From small horizontal channels worn on the sides of the rocks, and which seemed to indicate the action of water, we were led to imagine that this valley was formerly one of the channels of the Columbia, the course of which we supposed must have been changed by one of those extraordinary convulsions in the natural world, the causes of which are beyond human knowledge.

In the great plains between Oakinagan and Spokane there are at particular seasons numbers of small deer. The editor of Lewis and Clarke classes them as antelopes; but how much soever they may resemble those animals in swiftness and shape, their horns, as described by naturalists, are totally different. Their flesh is sweet and delicate, and they generally go in small herds. Towards the latter end of the summer they are in prime condition, and at that season we had some excellent sport in hunting them. The Indians, however, are not satisfied with our method of taking them in detail. On ascertaining the direction the deer have chosen, part of their hunters take a circuit in order to arrive in

front of the herd, while those behind set fire to the long grass, the flames of which spread with great rapidity. In their flight from the devouring element they are intercepted by the hunters, and, while they hesitate between these dangers, great numbers fall by the arrows of the Indians.

The wolves almost rival the Indians in their manner of attacking the deer. When impelled by hunger, they proceed in a band to the plains in quest of food. Having traced the direction which a herd have taken, they form themselves into a horse-shoe line, the extreme points of which they keep open on the grand ravine. After some cautious manœuvring they succeed in turning the progress of the deer in that direction. This object effected, they begin to concentrate their ranks, and ultimately hem in their victims in such a manner, as to leave them no choice but that of being dashed to pieces down the steep and rocky sides of the ravine, or falling a prey to the fangs of their merciless pursuers.

During this summer we had also some good horse-racing in the plains between the Pointed-Heart and Spokan lands. In addition to the

horses belonging to those tribes, we had a few from the Flat-heads, and several from the Chaudière Indians. There were some capital heats, and betting ran high. The horses were ridden by their respective owners, and I have sometimes seen upwards of thirty running a five-mile heat. The course was a perfect plain, with a light gravelly bottom, and some of the rearward jockeys were occasionally severely peppered in the face from the small pebbles thrown up by the hoofs of the racers in front.

Thus passed the summer of 1815, decidedly the most pleasant and agreeable season I enjoyed in the Indian country. Hunting, fishing, fowling, horse-racing, and fruit-gathering, occupied the day; while reading, music, backgammon, &c. formed the evening pleasures of our small but friendly mess. The heat was intense during this summer. The thermometer averaged from 84° to 96°, and on one occasion, the 5th of July, on which day we had a horse-race, it rose to 111° in the shade. The heat was however generally moderated by cooling breezes; otherwise it would have been quite insupportable.

Towards the latter end of August, and during the month of September, about noon, the thermometer generally stood at 86°, while in the mornings and evenings it fell to 35°, or 30°.

CHAPTER III.

Letter from Mr. Stuart—His account of New Caledonia—Navigation of the Columbia obstructed by ice—Miserable situation of the party during the winter—Author frost-bitten—Amusements—Departure of Mr. Keith—His letters—Author and party quit their winter encampment—Rapid change of seasons—Arrive at Fort George.

MR. ALEXANDER STEWART with his family left us early in September to take charge of Lesser Slave Lake, an important department on the east side of the mountains, at which place it had been arranged he was to pass the winter. He expected to have met Mr. Keith at the portage of the Rocky Mountains, on his way to the Columbia with dispatches from Fort William; but a month elapsed before the arrival of that gentleman, during which

period himself and family suffered great privations from want of food, &c.

The distracted state of the interior, owing to the disputes between the North-West and Hudson's-Bay Companies, added to other unexpected circumstances, impeded the progress of Mr. Keith, who did not reach the portage until the 15th of October. He parted from Mr. Stewart on the following day, and reached the Chaudière falls on the 22d, where he left his canoes, and arrived at Spokan House on the 24th, having previously ordered the men to drop down to the mouth of the Spokan river, at which place we were to join them. Among others, I received a letter by him from my friend Mr. John Stuart, dated New Caledonia,* 25th April, 1815, from which the following is an extract :

“ I find that the affairs of the Columbia appear to be getting from bad to worse; and the many difficulties and hardships, added to the dangers

* This district is very extensive, and lies on the west side of the Rocky Mountains.—It communicates with Athabasca department by Peace River, and extends from lat. 52° to 55° North.

peculiar to that unfortunate department, are hard to bear, and will keep me particularly anxious until I hear the result of the expedition of this spring to and from Fort George. Although the various encounters you have had with the natives should have taught them to respect the whites, and convince them that nothing is to be gained by force ; yet, as the attack of last autumn * was both daring and premeditated, I am afraid it is but the forerunner of greater aggression. You will, however, have one great advantage in the spring, which is, that if the natives be at that season numerous along the communication, it must be with a hostile design, and perhaps by beginning the assault yourselves you will be enabled to counteract its effects. Plausible, however, as this may appear in theory, it might probably have a very different effect in practice. I shall therefore leave off my advice, lest you might say to me what Hannibal did to the pedant. Although I deeply regret my absence from my friends on the Columbia, I have

* Alluding to the attack at the Wallah Wallah river, the particulars of which are already detailed.

no cause to complain of my lot ; for here, if not perfectly quiet, we are at least *hors de danger*. Messrs. M'Dougall and Harman are with me in the department. They are not only excellent traders, but (what is a greater novelty in this country) real Christians, and I sincerely wish that their steady and pious example was followed by others. We are at separate posts ; but as we feel great delight in each other's company, we visit as often as the situation of the country and our business will permit ; and in their conversation, which is always rational and instructive, I enjoy some of the most agreeable moments of my life.

“The salmon failed with us last season. This generally occurs every second year, and completely so every fourth year, at which periods the natives starve in every direction.

“They are of a lazy, indolent disposition, and, as a livelihood is rather easily procured, seldom give themselves much trouble in hunting the beaver or any animal of the fur kind.

“We have no buffalo or deer, except the *cari-bour* (rein-deer); and not many even of those ; so that, properly speaking, we may say that water

alone supplies the people of New Caledonia with food.

“The natives are numerous, and live stationary in villages of the same description as those on the lower part of the Columbia. In their looks and manner they bear a great affinity to the Chinooks. The meaning of their national name is “Carriers;” but the people of each village have a separate denomination. In a north-eastern direction their country nearly borders the Columbia; but no white man knows how far it extends towards the north-west. Their language little varies from that spoken on the sea-coast. The Carriers are naturally of an open and hospitable disposition; but very violent, and subject to sudden gusts of passion, in which much blood is often shed. However, those quarrels are soon made up, and as soon forgotten.

“They seldom, even in the most favorable seasons, kill many beaver in winter, the depth of the snow being, as they allege, too great. The utmost we can therefore do is to collect the produce of their summer hunt; which, as we have to go in different and distant directions, is a work of

much labour, and takes up a great portion of our men's time. We have no cause to complain of last year's trade; and, to finish my letter like a true North-Wester, I have great pleasure in acquainting you that our returns are about 95 packs,* which is a sufficient proof that the country is worth being attended to, and that it is susceptible of great improvement."

We left Spokane House on the 26th of October, and, having joined the canoes, proceeded to Fort George, at which place we arrived on the 8th of November.

Owing to the advanced season of the year, we hastened our departure for the interior, and accordingly succeeded in quitting the fort on the 19th of November. Our party upwards consisted of Messrs. Keith, Montour, Mackenzie, and myself, with fifty *voyageurs*, and Rivet, the interpreter. Not being accustomed to travel at such a late period, we found the weather rather cool for the first few days. Owing to the absence of the In-

* Each pack weighs ninety pounds, and contains on an average from fifty to sixty beaver-skins.

dians, few of whom were on the banks of the Columbia, we were deprived of our ordinary supply of horses and dogs for the kettle, and were forced to have recourse to our winter stock of flour, pork, and rice.

After passing the second falls the cold became more severe; and occasional pieces of ice drifting down the current, made us fear that our progress would be considerably obstructed in proportion as we advanced. Our apprehensions were unfortunately realised. As far as the entrance of Lewis river the navigation was tolerably free; but from thence the masses of floating ice became so large and numerous, that our frail little barks were in momentary danger of being stove to pieces, and it required all the skill and labour of our men to avoid them, and prevent the fatal consequences that would have inevitably followed such collisions. When it is recollected that we had to stem a strong current in vessels built, some of thin cedar plank, and others of the bark of the birch-tree, and all heavily laden, it may naturally be supposed that our fears were not groundless.

For three days our advance was slow through

this dangerous navigation ; but early on the fourth a scene presented itself which seemed likely to put a final stop to our progress. Some large masses of ice in their descent got entangled among the numerous rocks of a long and crooked rapid ; these were quickly followed by others, until the whole presented at the time of our arrival a line about a quarter of a mile in extent, of high, sharp, and fantastically shaped glaciers. Our men immediately commenced the portage with the greatest good-humour, and finished it late in the evening, when we were obliged to encamp in the dark, with scarcely wood sufficient to cook our cheerless supper. The current on the following day was partially free from ice, and we began to hope that we had passed the worst, until we arrived at a particular bend of the river, at which there was another rapid, choked up with a similar chain of glaciers, but of greater magnitude. The men, who had endured excessive hardships, still did not grumble, and began the portage in high spirits. We had not advanced more than half over it when the approach of darkness, joined to an unexpected supply of drift-wood, induced us to

stop for the night, which we passed in tolerable comfort. We finished the portage the following morning before breakfast; and the remainder of the day was hard labour between rapids and drifting ice. We encamped late at the foot of a long rapid. The men were greatly fatigued, and some of them knocked up. Early the next morning, after each man got a refreshing glass of rum, they commenced their work, and finished the portage at noon. About two miles above this we were again obliged to unload, and carry the goods and canoes upwards of nine hundred yards.

The exhaustion of the men this evening was extreme, and it became quite apparent that they could not much longer endure a continuance of such dreadful hardship.

We had previously ascertained that the river was frozen a considerable distance, and during a walk of three miles, which I took with Mr. Keith, it was one firm thick body of ice.

We breakfasted on the following morning at our encampment; shortly after which a body of the men approached the tent, and sent in word that they wished to speak to Mr. Keith. He came

out, when their spokesman, Basil Lucie, one of the best and most obedient men in the brigade, begged leave in a respectful manner to address a few words to him on their present situation. He stated that he and his comrades were reduced to the lowest degree of weakness from the excessive and unexpected labour they had undergone ; that while there was the least possibility of reaching their destination they did not repine ; but from the continued mass of ice and chains of rapids before them, that object was at present unattainable. He hoped Mr. Keith would not consider their conduct in a mutinous point of view. They were ready and willing to attempt all that men could achieve, with even the slightest prospect of success ; but worn down as they were, they felt themselves quite inadequate to make any further efforts towards extricating us from our disagreeable situation.

Mr. Keith glanced at the group, in whose features he read a co-incidence of sentiment with their speaker, joined to a determination of manner which, though humble and respectful, still evi-

dently showed that their resolution was fixed, and was the result of previous deliberation.

The principles of passive obedience and non-resistance in which the Canadian *voyageurs* are brought up, appeared to be endangered by this combination ; and the idea that his men were the first that ever dared, in the Indian country, even to remonstrate, gave a temporary shock to his pride : it was, however, transient. Justice and reason triumphed, and dissipated in a moment the slight symptoms of wounded dignity that at first ruffled his countenance.

Mr. Keith told them that he had no wish to force them to any labour incompatible with their strength ; that his only object was if possible to get to their destinations, which at present he admitted could not be done ; that he did not find fault with them for the expression of their sentiments, and regretted that they had not all a more comfortable wintering ground.

Lucie, after a short consultation with the men, replied that they all felt particularly grateful for the kind and considerate manner he had received

their appeal, and promised that no exertions on their part should be wanting to contribute to the comfort of himself and the other gentlemen.

There was fortunately about the encampment plenty of drift-wood, of which in a short time they collected an immense quantity. The trading goods were piled up in a safe situation; and with the assistance of the canoes, tarpaulins, and sails, the men constructed tolerably good cots for themselves.

We had a large tarpaulin porch erected in front of our tent, to which it was joined. In this porch we sat to enjoy the fire, the sparks from which we feared would have injured the canvass of our cold habitation. Our situation was disagreeably novel. About three hundred miles from our nearest post, with no means of approaching it, and no provisions save the scanty supply we had brought for consumption on our journey, and the usual quantities of rice and flour for our winter holidays. We had seen no Indians for several days, and our hopes of succour from them were consequently very weak. Our hunters were also unsuccessful, and reported that the surrounding country was

devoid of any animals that could be made subservient to our support. Neither did they in their different trips see any vestiges of the natives ; and most of the poor fellows returned from their cold and hungry journeys with frost-bitten fingers and toes.

About ten miles from our encampment, in the midst of the extensive plains on the north side, there is a high and conically shaped hill, which has been honoured with the name of Mount Nelson, to which Mr. Keith and I determined to proceed, for the purpose of surveying the surrounding country. The ground was covered with congealed snow, and after an arduous walk we reached the summit of the solitary mountain. We had a widely-extended prospect of the great plains in their wintry clothing : their undulations reminded us of the ocean, when the troubled waves begin to subside after a storm ; while the occasional appearance of leafless trees in the distance, partially diversifying the chilling scene, resembled the shattered masts of vessels that had suffered in the conflict of waters.

In vain did we strain our eyes to catch a glimpse

of any thing in human or animal shape. Neither man, nor fowl, nor cattle, nor beast, nor creeping thing, met our longing and expectant gaze. Animated nature seemed to have abandoned the dreary solitude, and silent desolation reigned all around.

We reached the encampment late in the evening, shortly after which I felt an unusual pain under the ball of one of my great toes. On examination, I ascertained that during our late walk a hole had been worn in the sole of the moccasin, which caused the toe to be frost-bitten. By the advice of our experienced Canadians I had it immediately rubbed with snow, keeping it, at the same time, some distance from the fire. The operation was painful; but it preserved the joint. After a few days' rubbing the skin became white, and ultimately peeled off like that of a whitlow when it begins to heal. This was succeeded by a new covering, which in a short time became as strong as formerly.

A few years before, one of the clerks, named Campbell, while out with a hunting party, met with a similar accident. He was a novice in the

country, and, contrary to the advice of his men, kept the frozen part at the fire, and refused to rub it with snow. The consequence was a mortification, which in a few days proved fatal; for at the place where the circumstance occurred he was between 2000 and 3000 miles from medical assistance.

This was the only time, during my residence in America, that I got nipped by the frost; indeed the inhabitants of our islands in general bear cold better than the Canadians, several of whom belonging to our party, although they were more warmly clothed, suffered severely in their extremities.

Were it not for the plentiful supply of fuel, our situation would have been insupportably miserable in this wretched encampment. As it was, our time passed heavily enough. Our travelling library was on too small a scale to afford much intellectual enjoyment. It only consisted of one book of hymns, two song-books, the latest edition of Joe Miller, and Darwin's Botanic Garden. The Canadians could not join us in the hymns, and we endeavoured in vain to tune our

pipes for profane harmony. "Yankey Doodle," the "Frog's Courtship," and the "Poker," were the only three that came within the scope of our vocal abilities. In fine weather our friend Mackenzie attempted with tolerable success the simple ditty of

The devil flew away with the little tailor
And the broad-cloth under his arm.

Our constant perusal of Old Joe made us so intimately acquainted with all his super-excellent good things, that we unconsciously became punsters, and were noted for many a day thereafter as the greatest men in the country for choice hits and *double-entendres*.

As for Darwin, we were almost tempted to commit him to the flames: for to read of the loves of the plants, when we knew they were all buried in their cold, cold grave, and waiting like ourselves for the renovating influence of spring, only gave additional torment to our situation.

In the intervals between harmony, joking, and botany, as we sat striving to warm ourselves under the tarpaulin porch, half blinded by the

puffs of smoke sent in by cold easterly gusts, we endeavoured to amuse each other by a detail of each schoolboy adventure, each juvenile anecdote, and each

Moving accident by flood or field,

that had ever befallen us. But on the arrival of dear delightful Christmas,—that happy season of festivity, when the poor man's table displays the accumulated savings of an economical advent, and the rich man's groans under more than its accustomed profusion; when emancipation from the birch expands the youthful heart into joy and gladness, and the partially-forgotten friendships of the old are renewed with greater fervency; when all denominations of Christians combine social pleasure with innocent amusement, and join in praise and thanksgiving to Him who came to save us;—our thoughts wandered towards home, and the happy faces surrounding the quiet and domestic hearth: the contrast was too strong for our philosophy, and we were almost tempted to call down inverted benedictions on the unfortunate beaver, and those who first in-

vented beaver hats, beaver bonnets, and beaver cloaks ! From that moment I began to balance between the comparatively pleasing uncertainties of civilised life, and the sad realities to which the life of an Indian trader is exposed. On the one side I placed—exile, starvation, Indian treachery, piercing colds, or burning heats, with the damp earth too often for a bed ; no society for a great portion of the year, except stupid Canadian *voyageurs*, or selfish suspicious natives ; ideas semi-barbarised by a long estrangement from the civilised world ; and, should I even survive these accumulated evils, and amass a few thousands, to find, on returning to my native country, the friends of my youth dead, and myself forgotten ; with a broken-down and debilitated constitution ; an Indian wife, and a numerous offspring, whose maternal tint, among the proud and the unthinking, too often subjects them to impertinent insult and unmerited obloquy.

To a British reader it would be useless to enumerate the opposing items, or to mention on which side the scale preponderated : it is enough to say that I determined on the earliest opportunity to

exchange dog for mutton, and horse for beef; icy winters and burning summers for our own more temperate climate; and copper beauties for fair ones.

1816.

A few men who had been despatched on foot to Oakinagan succeeded in reaching that place, and returned early in January with sixteen horses, so wretchedly lean, that they were quite unfit for the kettle, and almost unserviceable for any purpose. However, after a few days' rest, Mr. Keith selected eight of the strongest, which he loaded; and with which, accompanied by Mr. Montour and a party of the men, he set off for Oakinagan. They took the greater portion of the portable *vivres* with them.

Mr. Keith's departure was a sensible loss to our little society. Gifted by Nature with faculties of no ordinary description, he had the advantages of an early and excellent education, which he subsequently improved by an extensive course of reading. He also possessed a sound, vigorous understanding, with a strong memory; and had not

fortune cast him among the wilds of savage America, I have no doubt he would have attained eminence in any profession he might have chosen in his native country.

Mackenzie and I passed six more melancholy weeks in this spot, during which period we did not see an Indian. Our time would have passed heavily enough, only that we fortunately agreed on no single subject. Episcopacy and Presbyterianism, with all their off-shoots, formed a prolific source of polemical recreation; and when we became tired of the Mitre and the Kirk, we travelled back to Ossian and the Culdees. We argued on the immutability of the Magellanic clouds. We discussed the respective merits of every writer to whom the authorship of Junius has been attributed. We differed on the best mode of cooking a leg of mutton; and could not agree as to the superiority of a haggis over a harico, or of Ferintosh over Inishowen. Plum-pudding and rice had each its champion; and when he rose in all his strength and thought to destroy me with the plentiful variety of a Scotch breakfast, I at once floored him with the solid substantiality of an English

dinner. Thus with empty stomachs and half-famished bodies we argued on luxuries while we anticipated starvation; and we often awoke from the pleasing dream of a fat "sirloin," to attack the melancholy ribs of a fleshless horse.*

Mr. Keith reached Oakinagan on the 28th January, and on the following day addressed me a letter, an extract from which may not be uninteresting to the reader.

"The loaded horses performed the journey hither in about the time we had anticipated, having arrived here without any material accident (except drowning *Guenillon*) yesterday. As for myself, having left them on the 26th, accompanied by François, with the intention of reaching the fort that day, I accomplished my object at the expense of your *Poile de Souris* and my *Blond*. The latter gave up about three miles from the end of his journey; and yours brought me on slowly.

* Poor Mackenzie! In 1828 I received a letter from the Columbia, announcing the melancholy intelligence that he and four of his men had the preceding year been surprised by the savages on Fraser's River, who barbarously murdered the entire party.

Having once gone ahead, I had no alternative but to push on *bon gré mal gré*, or encamp without blanket or supper ; which circumstance I hope you will receive as a sufficient excuse for the rough treatment I gave your horse. *Grosses Pattes* had the honour of carrying my saddle-bags for two days and a half, both as a punishment for his laziness, and as a relief to hard-working horses. Our business here has been considerably retarded in consequence of our having given a *régâl* to the men in lieu of the New-Year's festivities, which you know were *douloureusement triste*. The party for Thompson's River took their departure the day before yesterday ; and owing to some delay about procuring Indian canoes, the Spokan people only crossed the river to-day. I have settled with Mr. Ross to send you four additional horses for consumption, in charge of two men, who will leave this on the 1st proximo. The weather here has been latterly very mild, which, coupled with other circumstances, induces me to think that you have been enabled to quit your encampment."

Mr. Keith was however mistaken as to his hopes of a favourable change in the navigation.

Another letter, dated "Spokan House, February 10th," says—"After a very unpleasant and irksome journey, occasioned by bad roads and the low and exhausted state of our horses, I arrived here on the 8th, and the loaded horses yesterday. We left several of the poor animals on the way. *Le Gris le Galeux* I left in charge of a middle-aged Indian, with a note addressed to you. I was obliged to give six others in charge to the bearer, whom you will please to reward. They were quite exhausted. Their names are, *La Gueule de travers*, *La Tête Plate*, *La Courte Oreille*, *La Crème de la petite Chienne*, *Le Poil de Souris*, and *Gardepie*. As you will probably be reduced to avail yourself of the same shifts, I should hope those horses will be tolerably well recruited by the time of your arrival. *Mon Petit Gris*, *La Queue Coupée*, *De la Vallée*, with *La Crème de la Corne fendue*, and *La petite Rouge*, (*nez blanc*,) belonging to the Company, have been left in charge of the bearer's brother. Upwards of three hundred beavers have been picked up since our departure for the sea; but starvation is staring us in the face, unless we eat the melancholy remnant of our lean horses.

The natives are abundantly supplied with *chevreuil* ; but they cannot be prevailed on to risk killing their emaciated and worn-down horses by bringing any meat to the fort. I am daily flattering myself by anticipation with the pleasure of seeing you pop in. However, as this is leap-year, we must make some extra allowance. Were all leap-years invariably attended with the same combination of difficulties and obstacles which we have encountered this winter, I would cheerfully give up one day *quadrennially* of my life, at the expense of shortening my existence, provided such a sacrifice could preserve things in their natural channel."

About the middle of February the snow and ice began to show strong symptoms of solar influence. The former disappeared with wonderful rapidity, and the loud crackling of the latter gave notice of its continual disruption. I sent a few men a day's march ahead, who brought back word that the ice was so far broken up, that we might try our fortune once more on water. We therefore prepared for embarkation ; and having killed our two last horses, we bade adieu on the

16th of February to our hibernal encampment, without experiencing one feeling of regret at the separation. For a few days our progress was slow, and exposed to much danger from the immense quantity of floating ice, to avoid which required all the strength and ingenuity of our *voyageurs*.

After many narrow escapes we reached Oakinagan on the 28th of February, with empty stomachs and exhausted bodies.

To a person accustomed to the gradual revolutions of the seasons in Europe an American winter changes with surprising rapidity. In less than a week from the first appearance of warmth,

————— subdued,

The frost resolves into a trickling thaw.

Spotted the mountains shine ; loose sleet descends,

And floods the country round. The rivers swell,

Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,

O'er rocks and woods in broad brown cataracts,

A thousand snow-fed torrents shoot at once !

The disappearance of the snow was followed by the most delightful and refreshing verdure,

and the early symptoms of vegetation gave us assurance that

Gentle spring in ethereal mildness

was once more about to gladden the heart of man ; while the light-hearted Canadians under its genial influence again chanted forth their wild and pleasing *chansons à l'aviron*.

We remained a few days at Oakinagan to recruit the men ; after which I proceeded with my party to Spokane House, at which place we arrived on the 9th of March.

Mr. Keith had been for some time under great anxiety as to our fate, and had despatched several Indians towards the Columbia with letters to me, some of which I received *en route*.

The Flat-head and Cootonais parties had arrived a few days previously ; but owing to their want of a sufficient supply of goods, occasioned by our stoppage on the ice, they made an indifferent winter's trade. We had scarcely time to recount to each other the various *uncos* we had experienced during the winter, when we were obliged to prepare for our spring voyage to the sea. We

left Spokan House on the 20th of March, and having joined the other parties at Oakinagan, proceeded with them downwards. The Columbia was one continued torrent, owing to the thousand little rivulets which the thaw had forced into it, and the beds of which in the summer season are quite dry, or hardly visible. Our passage was consequently rapid, and we arrived at the sea on the 3rd of April. Our friends at Fort George were all in prime health, and had weathered out the winter in a much more comfortable manner than we had. Mr. M'Tavish had made a trip in the Company's schooner to the southward, and touched at the Spanish settlements of Monterey and St. Francisco, at which places, in exchange for the produce of England, he obtained a plentiful supply of an article which is in great request among the Chinese, and for which the unsophisticated traders of Canton will barter their finest commodities; I mean *bona-fide* silver made into the shape of Spanish dollars, half-dollars, or pistareens.

As a fresh supply of trading goods was required in the interior, our stay at Fort George was ne-

cessarily short. It was, however, a complete carnival among proprietors, clerks, interpreters, guides, and canoe-men. Each *voyageur* received a liberal extra allowance of rum, sugar, flour, &c., and a fortnight of continual dissipation obliterated all recollection of the frozen and lenten severity of the by-gone winter.

CHAPTER IV.

Author placed in charge of Oakinagan—Erects new buildings there—Musquitoes—Sagacity of the horses—Rattlesnakes good food—Sarsaparilla—Black snakes—Climate—Whirlwinds—Handsome situation—Character of the tribe—Manner of trading—Extraordinary cures of consumption.

ON the 16th of April we took our departure for the interior. Our party consisted of sixty-eight men, including officers. Few Indians were on the banks of the river, and they conducted themselves peaceably. We arrived at Oakinagan on the 30th, from whence Mr. John George M'Tavish, accompanied by Messrs. La Rocque, Henry, and a party of Canadians, set off for the purpose of proceeding across the mountains to Fort William, the grand central depôt of the interior on the east side.

Mr. Ross, who had been for the last two years in charge of Oakinagan, was by a new arrangement detained this year at Fort George as one of the staff clerks ; and I was selected as commandant of the former place. Messrs. M'Millan and Montour were sent to Spokane, and my friend M'Donald proceeded to Kamloops, his old quarters. A sufficient number of men were left with me for all purposes of hunting, trading, and defence ; but, for the first time since I entered the country, I found myself without a colleague or a companion.

I had a long summer before me : it is the most idle season of the year ; and as it was intended to rebuild and fortify Oakinagan during the vacation, I lost no time in setting the men to work.

The immediate vicinity is poorly furnished with timber, and our wood-cutters were obliged to proceed some distance up the river in search of that necessary article, which was floated down in rafts. We also derived considerable assistance from the immense quantities of drift-wood which was intercepted in its descent down the Columbia by the great bend which that river takes above Oakin-

agan. "Many hands make light work;" and our men used such dispatch, that before the month of September we had erected a new dwelling-house for the person in charge, containing four excellent rooms and a large dining-hall, two good houses for the men, and a spacious store for the furs and merchandise, to which was attached a shop for trading with the natives. The whole was surrounded by strong palisades fifteen feet high, and flanked by two bastions. Each bastion had, in its lower story, a light brass four-pounder; and in the upper, loop-holes were left for the use of musketry.

Our living consisted of salmon, horse, wild-fowl, grouse, and small deer, with tea and coffee; but without the usual adjuncts of milk, bread, or butter. However, we looked upon those articles as excellent fare, and in point of living therefore had no cause of complaint throughout the summer.

I brought from Fort George a few bottles of essence of spruce, and by following the printed directions made excellent beer, which in the warm weather I found a delightful and healthy beverage.

Owing to the intense heat the men were obliged to leave off work every day at eleven, and did not resume until between two and three in the afternoon, by which period the burning influence of the sun began to decline. In the interval they generally slept.

The mosquitoes seldom annoyed us at mid-day; but when we wished to enjoy the refreshing coolness of a morning or evening's walk, they fastened on us with their infernal stings, against which we had no defence except leather. By smoking, we might indeed keep them at a civil distance from our noses and the parts thereunto adjacent; but this was a preventive which, if constantly practised, would have in a short time reduced our tobacco to a small quantity.

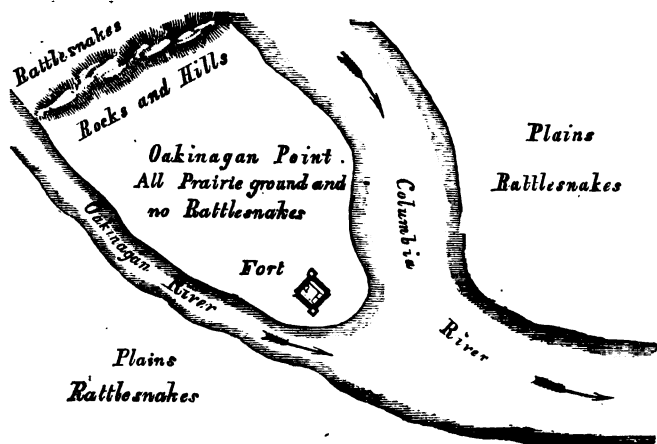
The annoyance during our meals was worse. We were obliged to have an iron pot at each end of the table, filled with saw-dust or rotten wood; which substance, when ignited, produced a quantity of thick smoke without flame. It effectually drove them away; but it was a desperate remedy; for during the process of mastication we were nearly suffocated from the dense clouds of vapour

by which we were enveloped. In the mean time our tormentors hovered about the doors and windows, watching the gradual dispersion of the smoke; and the moment the atmosphere became sufficiently clear they charged in from all directions on our heads, necks, ears, face, and hands, from whence it was impossible to dislodge them, until a fresh supply of saw-dust, thrown over the dying embers, put them once more to flight.

The horses also suffered severely from these insects and the horse-flies. We caused several fires of rotten wood to be made in the prairie in which they were grazing, and round which they instinctively congregated to avail themselves of the protection afforded by the smoke. Those which had short tails and cropped manes suffered more than the others; for with these weapons of nature (of which, in America, at all events, it is cruel to deprive them) they could whisk off great numbers of the enemy; while the cropped horses, having no such defence, often had their hoofs and legs severely burned by standing in the fires to avoid the stings of their assailants. I have

often observed the poor animals, when the smoke began to evaporate, gallop up to the fort, and neigh in the most significant manner for a fresh supply of damp fuel; and on perceiving the men appointed for that purpose proceed to the different fires, they followed them, and waited with the most sagacious patience until the smoke began to ascend and disperse their tormentors.

The point of land upon which the fort is built is formed by the junction of the Oakinagan River with the Columbia.



The point is about three miles in length and two in breadth. At the upper end is a chain of hills, round the base of which runs a rocky pathway leading to the upper part of the river. Rattlesnakes abound beyond these hills, and on the opposite sides of the Oakinagan and Columbia rivers: they are also found on both sides of the Columbia, below its junction with the former stream; but it is a curious fact, that on the point itself, that is, from the rocks to the confluence of the two rivers, a rattlesnake has never yet been seen. The Indians are unable to account for this peculiarity; and as we never read of St. Patrick having visited that part of the world, we were equally at a loss to divine the cause. The soil is dry, and rather sandy, and does not materially differ from that of the surrounding country.

Immense quantities of sarsaparilla grow on Oakinagan Point, which at times proved very beneficial to some of our valetudinarians.* There are also scattered over it a profusion of wild flowers, some of beautiful hues, but scarcely any

* Some of our men were salivated by taking a strong decoction of this root.

odour. Among them the sun-flower, for height and luxuriance, is conspicuous. This is the favourite plant of the delightful little humming-bird, (called by the Canadians *oiseau des dames*,) in the flowers of which it banquets nearly the livelong day.

Numbers of black snakes are found on the point; but they are perfectly harmless. We caught some of them in the rooms; and a few have been found at times quietly coiled up in the men's beds. The rattlesnakes were very numerous about the place where the men were cutting the timber. I have seen some of our Canadians eat them repeatedly! The flesh is very white, and, they assured me, had a delicious taste. Their manner of dressing them is simple. They at first skin the snake in the same manner as we do eels, after which they run through the body a small stick, one end of which is planted in the ground, leaning towards the fire: by turning this *brochet* occasionally, the snake is shortly roasted. Great caution however is required in killing a snake for eating; for if the first blow fails, or only partially stuns him, he instantly bites himself in different

parts of the body, which thereby becomes poisoned, and would prove fatal to any person who should partake of it. The best method is to wait until he begins to uncoil and stretches out the body, preparatory to a spring; when, if a steady aim be taken with a stick about six feet long, it seldom fails to kill with the first blow.

The climate of Oakinagan is highly salubrious. We have for weeks together observed the blue expanse of heaven unobscured by a single cloud. Rain, too, is very uncommon; but heavy dews fall during the night.

Several dreadful whirlwinds occurred during the summer, which in their effects more resembled the sirocco than any thing I had ever experienced in America. When the men observed these sudden and dangerous squalls rising, they threw themselves prostrate on the ground, to avoid the clouds of sand and dust, which otherwise would have blinded them. They were generally most violent on the hottest days; and on some occasions they forced the planks which were piled at the saw-pit several feet into the air.

The situation of Oakinagan is admirably adapted

for a trading town. With a fertile soil, a healthy climate, horses in abundance for land carriage, an opening to the sea by the Columbia, and a communication to the interior by it and the Oakinagan; the rivers well stocked with fish; and the natives quiet and friendly; it will in my opinion be selected as a spot pre-eminently calculated for the site of a town, when civilisation (which is at present so rapidly migrating towards the westward) crosses the Rocky Mountains and reaches the Columbia.

The natives of Oakinagan are an honest, quiet tribe. They do not muster more than two hundred warriors; but as they are on terms of friendship with the Kamloops, Sinapoils, and other small tribes in their rear; and as the Columbia in front forms an impassable barrier against any surprise from their old enemies the Nez Percés, they have in a great degree forgotten the practice of "glorious war," and are now settled down into a peaceful and rather slothful tribe. Their principal occupations consist in catching and curing salmon, and occasionally hunting for deer and beaver, neither of which abounds on their lands.

Acts of dishonesty are of rare occurrence among either men or women ; and breaches of chastity among the latter are equally infrequent.

The chief is an old man, who apparently possesses but little power. However, from their settled habits of living, and long abstinence from war, I should imagine there is very little necessity for the exercise of his authority.

Their principal amusement is gambling, at which they are not so quarrelsome as the Spokans and other tribes ; but when any doubtful case occurs, it is referred for arbitration to one of their elders, by whose decision the parties strictly abide.

Mr. M'Gillivray passed the winter of 1813-14 here, and had only four or five men with him, two of whom were generally absent hunting. The buildings at that period were very poorly defended ; and, were the natives actuated by feelings of hostility, they could have easily robbed the fort and destroyed his little party. This circumstance will show in the strongest point of view their friendly feelings towards us.

Their manner of trading resembles that of most other tribes. A party arrive at the fort loaded

with the produce of their hunt, which they throw down, and round which they squat themselves in a circle. The trader lights the calumet of peace, and directing his face first to the east, and so to the other cardinal points, gives at each a solemn puff. These are followed by a few short quick whiffs, and he then hands the calumet to the chief of the party, who repeats the same ceremony. The chief passes it to the man on his right, who only gives a few whiffs, and so on through the whole party until the pipe is smoked out. The trader then presents them with a quantity of tobacco to smoke *ad libitum*, which they generally finish before commencing their barter, being, as they say themselves, "A long time very hungry for a smoke."

When the smoking terminates, each man divides his skins into different lots. For one, he wants a gun; for another, ammunition; for a third, a copper kettle, an axe, a blanket, a tomahawk, a knife, ornaments for his wife, &c., according to the quantity of skins he has to barter.

The trading business being over, another general smoking-match takes place; after which they retire

to their village or encampment. They are shrewd, hard dealers, and not a whit inferior to any native of Yorkshire, Scotland, or Connaught, in driving a bargain.

The Oakinagan mode of curing some of our diseases would probably startle many of the faculty. The following case in particular passed under my own observation :

One of the proprietors had, in the year 1814, taken as a wife a young and beautiful girl, whose father had been one of the early partners, and whose mother was a half breed (her grandmother having been a native of the Cree tribe); so that, although not a pure white, she was fairer than many who are so called in Europe. He proceeded with her to Fort George; but the change of climate, from the dry and healthy plains of Forts des Prairies to the gloomy forests and incessant rains on the north-west coast, was too much for her delicate frame, and she fell into a deep consumption. As a last resource, her husband determined to send her to Oakinagan to try the change of air, and requested me to procure her accommodation at that place for the summer.

This I easily managed. She was accompanied by a younger sister, and an old female attendant.

For some days after her arrival we were in hourly expectation of her death. Her legs and feet were much swoln, and so hard, that the greatest pressure created no sensation : her hair had fallen off in such quantities as nearly to cause baldness ; a sable shade surrounded her deeply sunk eyes. She was in fact little more than a skeleton, with scarcely any symptoms of vitality, and her whole appearance betokened approaching dissolution. Such was the state of the unfortunate patient, when an old Indian, who had for some days observed her sitting in the porch-door, where she was brought supported on pillows to enjoy the fresh air, called me aside, and told me he had no doubt of being able to cure her provided I should agree to his plan ; but added, that he would not give any explanation of the means he intended to use, for fear we might laugh at him, unless we consented to adopt them. We accordingly held a consultation ; the result of which was, that the Indian should be allowed to follow his own me-

thod. It could not make her worse, and there was a possibility of success.

Having acquainted him with her acquiescence, he immediately commenced operations by seizing an ill-looking, snarling, cur dog, which he half strangled; after which he deliberately cut its throat. He then ripped open the belly, and placed the legs and feet of the patient inside, surrounded by the warm intestines, in which position he kept them until the carcase became cold. He then took them out, and bandaged them with warm flannel, which he said was "very good." The following day another dog lost its life, and a similar operation was performed. This was continued for some time, until every ill-disposed cur in the village had disappeared by the throat-cutting knife of our dog-destroying doctor, and we were obliged to purchase some of a superior breed. While she was undergoing this process she took, in addition, a small quantity of bark daily in a glass of port wine. In the mean time the swelling gradually decreased, the fingers lost their corpse-like nakedness, the hectic flushes became rarer, and "that most pure spirit of sense,"

the eye, gave evident tokens of returning animation. When her strength permitted, she was placed on the carriage of a brass field-piece, supported by bolsters, and drawn occasionally a mile or two about the prairie. The Indian continued at intervals to repeat this strange application, until the swelling had entirely disappeared, and enabled her once more to make use of her limbs.

Two-and-thirty dogs lost their lives in bringing about this extraordinary recovery, and among them might truly be numbered

Mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

She gradually regained possession of her appetite; and when her husband arrived in the autumn from Fort George, for the purpose of crossing the mountains, she was strong enough to accompany him. The following summer, on my journey across the continent, I met them at Lac la Pluie. She was in the full enjoyment of health, and "in the way which ladies wish to be, who love their lords."

Before I quit this subject I may be permitted to

mention another remarkable cure by means nearly similar, which occurred at Fort George. One of the proprietors, who had been stationed there for two years, had, like his countryman Burns, an unconquerable “*penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain.*” And among the flat-headed beauties of the coast, where chastity is not classed as the first of virtues, he had unfortunately too many opportunities of indulging his passion. His excesses greatly impaired his health, and obliged him to have recourse to the most powerful medicine of the *materia medica*. His constitution was naturally weak, and the last attack was of so serious a nature, as to deprive him for some days of the powers of articulation. The contents of the medicine chest were tried in vain, and all hopes of his recovery had been abandoned, when a Clatsop Indian undertook to cure him. Mr. M— consented, and a poor horse, having been selected as a sacrifice, was shot. The Indian then made an opening in the paunch sufficiently wide merely to admit the attenuated body of the patient, who was plunged in a state of nudity into the foaming mass of entrails up to the chin. The

orifice was tucked in tightly about his neck, to prevent the escape of steam, and he was kept in that situation until the body of the animal had lost its warmth. He was then conveyed to bed, and enveloped in well-heated blankets.

The following day he felt considerably better ; and in a few days afterwards another horse suffered. He underwent a second operation, which was attended by similar results. From thence he slowly regained his strength ; and by adhering to a strict regimen, was finally restored to his ordinary health. Horses are scarce at Fort George, were it not for which circumstance, Mr. M— assured me he would have killed two or three more from the beneficial effects they produced on his constitution. His late illness, however, was so dangerous, and his recovery so unexpected, that it checked for the future his amatory propensities.

CHAPTER V.

Author nearly blinded by hawks—Foxes—Great number of wolves—Their method of attacking horses—Lynxes—Bears—Anecdote of a kidnapping bruin—Ingenious plan of getting off bear-skins—Account of the horses on the Columbia—Great feat performed by one.

IN the great plains on the east side of the Columbia, between Oakinagan and the Spokane lands, there are, during the autumnal months, plenty of deer, grouse, wild ducks, and geese.

I spent a great portion of this period with a few of my men and some Indians on shooting excursions, and had excellent sport.

We stopped one very sultry day about noon to rest our horses, and enjoy the cooling shade af-

fording by a clump of sycamore-trees with a refreshing draught from an adjoining spring. Several large hawks were flying about the spot, two of which we brought down. From their great size, immense claws, and large hooked beaks, they could have easily carried off a common-sized duck or goose. Close to our resting-place was a small hill, round the top of which I observed the hawks assemble, and judging that a nest was there, without communicating my intention to any of the party, I determined to find it out.

I therefore cautiously ascended the eminence, on the summit of which I perceived a nest larger than a common-sized market-basket, formed of branches of trees, one laid regularly over the other, and the least of which was an inch in circumference. Around it were scattered bones, skeletons, and half-mangled bodies of pigeons, sparrows, humming-birds, &c. Next to a rattlesnake and a shark, my greatest aversion is a hawk; and on this occasion it was not diminished by observing the remains of the feathered tribe, which had, from time to time, fallen a prey to their voracious appetite. I therefore determined to destroy the

nest, and disperse its inhabitants ; but I had scarcely commenced the work of demolition with my dagger, when old and young flew out and attacked me in every direction, but particularly about my face and eyes ; the latter of which, as a punishment for my temerity, they seemed determined to separate from their sockets.

In the mean time I roared out lustily for assistance, and laid about me with the dagger. Three men promptly ran up the hill, and called out to me to shut my eyes, and throw myself on the ground, otherwise I should be shortly blinded, promising in the mean time to assist me. I obeyed their directions ; and just as I began to kiss the earth, a bullet from one of their rifles brought down a large hawk, apparently the father of the gang. He fell close to my neck, and in his expiring agonies made a desperate bite at my left ear, which I escaped, and in return gave him the *coup de grace*, by thrusting about four inches of my dagger down his throat. The death of their chieftain was followed by that of two others, which completely dispersed them ; and we retired after breaking up their den.

Red foxes and wolves are also in great numbers about the plains; but their skins are not now purchased by the Company, as the price given for them would not defray the expense of their carriage.

The prairie wolves are much smaller than those which inhabit the woods. They generally travel together in numbers, and a solitary one is seldom met with. Two or three of us have often pursued from fifty to one hundred, driving them before us as quickly as our horses could charge.

Their skins are of no value, and we do not therefore waste much powder and ball in shooting them. The Indians, who are obliged to pay dear for their ammunition, are equally careful not to throw it away on objects that bring no remunerating value. The natural consequence is, that the wolves are allowed to multiply; and some parts of the country are completely over-run by them. The Indians catch numbers of them in traps, which they set in the vicinity of those places where their tame horses are sent to graze. The traps are merely excavations covered over with slight switches and hay, and baited with meat,

vance; and immediately uttering a simultaneous yell, they charged after the fugitives, still preserving their crescent form. Two or three of the horses, which were not in the best condition, were quickly overtaken by the advanced guard of the enemy. The former, finding themselves unable to keep up with the band, commenced kicking at their pursuers, several of which received some severe blows; but these being reinforced by others, they would have shortly despatched the horses had we not, just in time, emerged from our place of concealment, and discharged a volley at the enemy's centre, by which a few were brought down. The whole battalion instantly wheeled about, and fled towards the hills in the utmost disorder; while the horses, on hearing the fire, changed their course and galloped up to us. Our appearance saved several of them from the fangs of their foes; and by their neighing they seemed to express their joy and gratitude at our timely interference.

Although the wolves of North America are the most daring of all the beasts of prey on that continent, they are by no means so courageous or

ferocious as those of Europe, particularly in Spain or the south of France, in which countries they commit dreadful ravages both on man and beast;* whereas an American wolf, except forced by desperation, will seldom or ever attack a human being; a remarkable instance of which is mentioned in the detail of my wanderings in the eighth chapter, Vol. I. The lynxes are by no means so numerous as the wolves, but they are equally destructive, and individually more daring. They generally travel alone, or in couples, and seldom fly as the wolves do on the first approach of man. The largest American lynx does not exceed in size an English mastiff.

* During the late Peninsular war, the Duke of Wellington had occasion to send despatches by a mounted dragoon, to a general of division not quite a day's march distant from head-quarters. The answer not having arrived at the period it was expected, His Grace despatched three others to ascertain the cause. They found the mangled remains of their unfortunate comrade lying beside those of his horse, and the greater portion of the flesh eaten off their bodies. His sword was firmly grasped in his mutilated hand, and the dead carcasses of seven or eight wolves which lay about him exhibited strong marks of the sabre, and of the desperation with which he fought before he was overpowered by numbers.

Bears are scarce about the plains, but they are found in considerable numbers in the vicinity of the woods and lakes. Their flesh is excellent, particularly in the summer and autumnal months, when roots and wild fruit are had in abundance. They are most dangerous animals to encounter, especially if they are slightly wounded, or that any of their cubs are in danger, in which case they will rush on a man, though he were armed at all points; and woe to him if Bruin should once enfold him in his dreadful grasp.

I have seen several of our hunters, as well as many Indians, who had been dreadfully lacerated in their encounters with bears: some have been deprived of their ears, others had their noses nearly torn off, and a few have been completely blinded. From the scarcity of food in the spring months they are then more savage than at any other season; and during that period it is a highly dangerous experiment to approach them.

The following anecdote will prove this; and, were not the fact confirmed by the concurrent testimony of ten more, I would not have given it a place among my *memorabilia*.

In the spring of this year (1816) Mr. M'Millan had despatched ten Canadians in a canoe down the Flat-head River on a trading excursion. The third evening after quitting the fort, while they were quietly sitting round a blazing fire eating a hearty dinner of deer, a large half-famished bear cautiously approached the group from behind an adjacent tree; and before they were aware of his presence, he sprang across the fire, seized one of the men (who had a well-furnished bone in his hand) round his waist, with the two fore paws, and ran about fifty yards with him on his hind legs before he stopped. His comrades were so thunder-struck at the unexpected appearance of such a visitor, and his sudden retreat with *pauvre Louisson*, that they for some time lost all presence of mind; and, in a state of fear and confusion, were running to and fro, each expecting in his turn to be kidnapped in a similar manner; when at length Baptiste Le Blanc, a half-breed hunter, seized his gun, and was in the act of firing at the bear, but was stopped by some of the others, who told him he would inevitably kill their friend in the position in which he was then placed. During

this parley Bruin relaxed his grip of the captive, whom he kept securely under him, and very leisurely began picking the bone which the latter had dropped. Once or twice Louisson attempted to escape, which only caused the bear to watch him more closely; but on his making another attempt, he again seized Louisson round the waist, and commenced giving him one of those infernal embraces which generally end in death. The poor fellow was now in great agony, and vented the most frightful screams; and observing Baptiste with his gun ready, anxiously watching a safe opportunity to fire, he cried out, *Tire! tire! mon cher frère, si tu m'aimes. Tire, pour l'amour du bon Dieu! A la tête! à la tête!* This was enough for Le Blanc, who instantly let fly, and hit the bear over the right temple. He fell, and at the same moment dropped Louisson; but he gave him an ugly scratch with his claws across the face, which for some time afterwards spoiled his beauty. After the shot Le Blanc darted to his comrade's assistance, and with his *couteau de chasse* quickly finished the sufferings of the man-stealer, and rescued his friend from impending death; for,

with the exception of the above-mentioned scratch, he escaped uninjured. They commenced the work of dissection with right good-will; but on skinning the bear, they found scarcely any meat on his bones; in fact, the animal had been famishing, and in a fit of hungry desperation made one of the boldest attempts at kidnapping ever heard of in the legends of ursine courage.

The skins of these animals are not at present held in the same estimation that they were formerly, particularly the brown or grizzly kind, few of which are now purchased. Good rich black ones and cubs still bring a fair price at the trading posts nearest to Canada and Hudson's Bay.

About twenty-five years ago the Company had a great number of bear-skins lying in their stores, for which there was no demand. One of the directors, a gentleman well known for the fertility of his expedients as an Indian trader, hit upon a plan for getting off the stock, which succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectation. He selected a few of the finest and largest skins in the store, which he had made into a hamper cloth splendidly ornamented in silver with the royal

arms. A deputation of the directors then waited upon a late Royal Duke with the hammercloth, and respectfully requested that he would be graciously pleased to accept it as a slight testimony of their respect. His Royal Highness returned a polite answer, and condescendingly consented to receive the present. A few days afterwards the King held a levee, and his illustrious son proceeded to court in his state-coach with its splendid hammercloth. It attracted universal attention; and to every inquiry as to where the skins were obtained, the answer was, "from the Northwest Company." In three weeks afterwards there was not a black, or even a brown bear-skin in the Company's warehouse; and the unfortunate peer, who could not sport a hammercloth of bear, was voted a bore by his more lucky brethren.

The skin of the red fox is not now accounted valuable; and scarcely any are purchased. The Indians therefore seldom trouble themselves in hunting these animals, and in some districts they are consequently greatly on the increase. There are no black foxes on the Columbia; but next to them in beauty and value are the silver grey,

which bring a high price, and several of which are purchased at Oakinagan and Spokane. The mandarins of China hold them in great estimation, and those which we sent to Canton were eagerly purchased for their use.

The number of horses among the various tribes on the Columbia and its tributary streams differs with the circumstances of the country. Among the Flat-heads, Cootonais, Spokans, &c., whose lands are rather thickly wooded, there are not more than sufficient for their actual use, and every colt, on arriving at the proper age, is broken in for the saddle. But in the countries inhabited by the Wallah Wallahs, Nez Percés, and Shoshonés, which chiefly consist of open plains, well watered and thinly wooded, they are far more numerous, and thousands are allowed to go wild. Their general height is about fifteen hands, which they seldom exceed; and ponies are very scarce. Those reared in the plains are excellent hunters, and the swiftest racers; but are not capable of enduring the same hardships as those bred in the vicinity of the high and woody districts. We have seen from seven hundred to a thousand

wild horses in a band ; and some of the party who crossed the continent by the Missouri route, told me that in parts of the country belonging to the Snake Indians, bands varying from three to four thousand were frequently seen ; and further to the southward they are far more numerous.* The Indian horses are never shod ; and, as we were equally with them deprived of smith, farrier, and iron, we were unable to introduce that valuable practice into the country. Owing to this circumstance, their hoofs, particularly of such as are in constant work, are nearly worn away before they are ten or eleven years old, after which they are unfit for any labour except carrying children. They are easily managed, and are seldom vicious. An Indian horse is never taught to trot. The natives dislike this pace, and prefer to it the canter or light gallop. They are hard taskmasters ; and the hair-rope bridles, with the padded deer-skin saddles which they use,

* The Spaniards at St. Francisco informed our traders that in the year 1812 they were obliged to kill upwards of 30,000 horses in California, in order to preserve sufficient grass for the buffalo, the fat of which forms an article of exportation.

lacerate the mouths and backs of the unfortunate animals in such a manner, as to render them at times objects of commiseration to men of harder hearts than the late worthy member for Galway. In summer they have no shelter from the heat; in winter no retreat from the cold; and their only provender throughout the year is the wild loose grass of the prairies, which in the latter season is generally covered with snow; and in the former is brown and arid, from the intense heat of the sun.

I have already given some details of the hardships to which the horses in this country are subject, and shall merely add one anecdote more. In the spring of 1813, before the dissolution of the Pacific Fur Company, while I was stationed at Spokan House with Mr. Clarke, he received a letter from Mr. Farnham, who had the charge of the party sent to the Flat-heads, stating that he had arrived at the Flat-head portage, a distance of seventy-two miles from Spokan House, where he should be obliged to remain a few days to recruit his horses; that his trading goods were exhausted, and he was entirely out of tobacco; that a large party of Flat-heads were fol-

lowing them with a quantity of valuable skins ; that his rival, Mr. M'Donald, was also unsupplied with tobacco ; that whichever of them got the first supply of that article would, by treating the Indians to a grand smoking-match, succeed in getting the produce of their hunt ; and that in order to attain that object, it was absolutely necessary the tobacco required should be with him that night, otherwise the natives would all go over in a body to Mr. M'Donald, with whom they had been longer acquainted than with him.

It was eleven o'clock in the forenoon when this letter reached us, and Mr. Clarke thought it impossible for any horse to go a distance of seventy-two miles during the remainder of that day : at all events, he knew that none of the Company's horses were fit for such a task ; and was about giving up the idea as hopeless, when I offered to undertake it, with a celebrated horse of his own, called "*Le Bleu*." The case was important : a blow was necessary to be struck ; and although he prized the horse above all his chattels in the Indian country, he at once determined to sacrifice his private feelings to the interests of the Com-

pany. Two men were selected to accompany me, and orders were given to catch "*Le Bleu*." He was a noble animal, between fifteen and sixteen hands high, seven years of age, admirably built, and derived his name from his colour, which was a dappled white and sky-blue. He was also a prime racer, and had beaten all competitors on the turf.

Owing to the delay occasioned by catching the horses we did not start till twelve o'clock. I remained in company with the men for the first two hours at a slight canter, after which I took the lead in a hard gallop, and quickly lost sight of them. I followed an excellent well-beaten pathway for upwards of sixty miles through the Pointed-heart Plains; but late in the evening it brought me to a thick wood, through which it runs for a distance of ten miles, when it terminates at the portage.

Shortly after entering the wood, night overtook me; and I several times lost the pathway, which, owing to the darkness, and a quantity of fallen trees and brushwood, became extremely intricate. The sagacity of my horse, however, extricated me

from these *égaremens*, and a little after eight o'clock I emerged from the forest, and was delighted at the cheering appearance of a range of fires along the banks of the river. The *Bleu*, which had been for some time drooping, on seeing the light, knew his task was at an end, and galloped up in fine style to Farnham's tent, when he was immediately let loose to regale himself in the prairie.

I had brought a few fathoms of thick twist-tobacco with me; on learning which the Indians crowded about us, and in a few seconds each man's head was enveloped in clouds of smoke. They promised that we should have all their skins; but in order to make assurance doubly sure, we requested them to bring their respective packages to the tent, and deposit them therein until morning. This was at once complied with, after which the smoking recommenced. About two hours after, two of our rivals arrived with a quantity of tobacco. They had started from Spokan shortly after me, but were never able to overtake the gallant *Bleu*. They were much better acquainted with the intricacies of the pathway

through the wood than I was; and if their horses had been equal to mine, it is very probable the result would have been different. They were much chagrined at our success; and on taxing the Indians with having deserted them for strangers, they replied, that being the first to satisfy their hungry cravings for tobacco, they could do no less than give us the preference; but added that they would punctually pay them any debts which they had contracted with Mr. M'Donald, which promise they faithfully kept.

About midnight the two men, whom I had left behind me, reached the encampment. They also were for some time lost in the wood, and like myself were obliged to depend on the sagacity of their horses to set them right.

We returned to Spokane House by easy stages; but I did not ride the *Bleu*. In less than a week after he was perfectly recovered from the fatigue of his journey, and in the summer of the same year beat the fleetest horses of both Companies on the race-course.

CHAPTER VI.

Letter from the proprietors—Author winters at Oakinagan—
Letter from Mr. Mackenzie—A number of horses stolen—
Successful plan to recover them—Description of soil, climate, productions, &c. of the lower part of the Columbia.

THE summer of 1816 did not tend to diminish my growing aversion to the Indian country. Horse-racing, deer-hunting, and grouse-shooting were pleasant pastimes enough, but the want of companionable society rendered every amusement “stale, flat, and unprofitable.” Zimmerman in vain displayed the charms of solitude: he never vegetated amongst savages. Bad French and worse Indian began to usurp the place of English, and I found my conversation gradually becoming

a barbarous compound of various dialects. The cherished object too of a young man's ambition was still at an immeasurable distance, and I felt that an old age of affluence could only be purchased by the sacrifice in youth of all the comforts of social life. In the midst of these and similar reflections the monotony of my life was, for a moment, relieved by the arrival of Mr. Donald Mackenzie with two canoes and twenty men from Fort William. This gentleman had been one of the proprietors of the Pacific Fur Company, from which, after its dissolution, he changed to the North-west. He was now on his way to Fort George with dispatches, and took charge of the autumn brigade to that place. By Mr. Mackenzie I received letters from home, which at once determined me to apply for leave to quit the country; and having written to the proprietors to that effect, I received the following answer: viz.—

“Fort George, September 30th, 1816.

“Dear Sir,

“In acceding to your most earnest request of being discharged from our service ensuing

spring, we give way to the voice of nature and of humanity, which cannot, will not for a moment allow us to hesitate when the object is to re-animate and cheer up the drooping spirits of your venerable and aged parents. At the same time rest assured that on no other consideration could we ever be induced to part with your most useful services, more particularly at a period when we are on the eve of being put to such shifts to fill up the different requisitions.

“As to your character, as far as prudence, integrity, and perseverance, joined to an unceasing desire to please and render yourself useful, can command regard, you certainly are deservingly entitled to ours, and no encomium on our part could add to our high opinion of your merit.

“In expectation of seeing you next spring at this place, prior to your taking your final departure, we remain, with sincere regard,

“Dear Sir,

“Your most obedient servants,

“JAMES KEITH,

“ANGUS BETHUNE,

“DONALD MACKENZIE,

“For North-west Company.”

Mr. Mackenzie was himself the bearer of this letter. He strongly urged me to change my resolution, and declared if I consented to remain in the country my promotion should take place in a short time after the expiration of my engagement; but as my mind was made up to return home, I refused acceding to his friendly wishes.

It was arranged I should pass the winter in my present post (Oakinagan), in which, on account of my popularity with the natives, I had succeeded in obtaining more furs than most of my predecessors. Mr. Mackenzie went to Spokan with Messrs. M'Donald and Montour for the outposts, Mr. Ross proceeded to Kamloops, and Mr. M'Millan to his old post at the Flat-heads.

Mr. Mackenzie had made arrangements with the chiefs of the various tribes for the transmission of an express from Oakinagan to Fort George, promising to each a handsome present, provided it reached its destination, and that an answer was brought back. In pursuance of this plan, he forwarded despatches to the sea, to which he received an answer, as will be seen from the following letter:

“Spokane House, February 12th, 1817.

“Dear Cox,

“It was but yesterday, on my return from the *Nez-Percés*, that I had the pleasure of perusing your much esteemed letter of the 29th of December. My despatches reached Fort George in thirty-six days, and were answered on the 12th of December; so that in sixteen days from the fort they reached your place. The safety of this conveyance will, I hope, do away with the necessity of the usual Fall voyage to the sea. On arriving here I found I had ninety souls to provide with the necessaries of life, and therefore determined on an excursion to Lewis River. Your friend, Mr. M'Donald, accompanied me, and, besides the Canadians, I took ten Sandwich Islanders, whom I armed and accoutred quite *en militaire*. The *Nez-Percés* did not half relish the swarthy aspect of these invincibles, and fancied I intended to resent former grudges. However, we did not see them all.

“My trip has simply answered the purpose of obtaining provisions for the passing day, which, at this post, I assure you has been no contemptible

attainment. The horses I purchased are already nearly consumed ; you will therefore, I trust, excuse my sending two of my people in your direction. I have ordered them to encamp in your environs ; and the Nipising, who is chasseur, is to supply your board with game. It will prove a seasonable variety to your dried salmon.

“ I regret the frost prevents me sending you potatoes : they would be of no service. I have received accounts from Mr. M^cMillan. He informs me he was nearly surrounded by the Piegans (the Black-feet) ; but they were prevented by hunger from advancing near enough to the fort. He has had a lucky escape. Should you be induced to alter your mind about quitting the Company, I shall feel very happy by your remaining with us. You may rely on all I have told you. You need feel no scruples on that head. I passed an agreeable time with our friend Finan. He is certainly a most worthy mortal, and desires to be remembered to you.

“ Yours, &c.

“ DONALD MACKENZIE.”*

* This gentleman is now governor of the colony established at Red River.

Mr. Mackenzie, as already mentioned, had crossed the continent with Mr. Hunt. In the course of that journey he passed through the lands of the Snake Indians, in which he observed great numbers of beavers ; and his chief motive in coming to the Columbia was to form a trading establishment in that dangerous district, no attempt at which had been made since the massacre of Mr. Read and his party. Mr. Mackenzie was peculiarly qualified for this hazardous undertaking. He was an experienced trader, and possessed an accurate knowledge of the localities of the country. He could, with his rifle, drive a dozen balls consecutively at one hundred paces through a Spanish dollar, which accomplishment alone was enough to secure him the respect of the Indians. To the most cautious prudence he united the most dauntless intrepidity ; in fact, no hardships could fatigue, no dangers intimidate him. As we had many reasons to suspect that the Pierced-noses, through whose lands a party proceeding to the country of the Snakes must pass, were actuated by feelings of hostility, Mr. Mackenzie undertook the winter's trip to Lewis River, not so much for the purpose of purchasing horses,

(for that Mr. M'Donald could have done,) as to form a judgment from personal observation of their disposition. Although his reception was not the most friendly, he was satisfied there was little danger to be apprehended, and he therefore determined to make the attempt early in the summer.

I passed five weary winter months at Oakinagan without a friend to converse with; and the severity of the season debarred me from the exercise of field sports, which, during the summer, partially relieved the unsocial tedium of my existence. Tea and tobacco were my only luxuries; and my pipe was my pot-companion. Dried salmon was our principal article of food, with a bit of lean deer, with which the natives occasionally supplied us, like

Angels' visits, few and far between.

Our horses were too few and too poor for the kettle; and scarcely a week elapsed that one did not fall a victim to the villanous wolves which infested the snow-covered plains.

One morning in the beginning of February, the men whom I had sent out to collect the horses found ten missing, and the fresh traces of human feet in the snow convinced them they must have been stolen. I immediately sent for the Oakinagan chief, and told him I should require his assistance in recovering the horses. This he readily granted, and forthwith ordered five of his young men to catch their horses and join him at the fort. I selected three Canadians and two Sandwich Islanders to accompany me, and in less than an hour all our warlike arrangements were completed. We proceeded in the first instance to the prairie; and the chief having made his observations, declared at once they must have been stolen by the Sinapoils. It had snowed hard the preceding night; which circumstance, without the assistance of the Indians, would have puzzled our men to find out the traces of the robbers. The chief however quickly discovered their route, and we followed his guidance until late in the evening, when we were obliged to stop to rest the horses, and take a little refreshment. He told me we were within a few hours' march of the robbers,

and advised us to continue on during the night, by which means we were certain of catching them unprepared, when we could kill them all, and recover our horses. Having no relish for raising scalps, I declined his sanguinary proposal; at which he did not appear too well pleased. We resumed our journey before day-break the following morning; and after riding about two hours, the chief desired us to dismount, and lead our horses. We complied. In less than half an hour our path opened into a small glen, in the bottom of which were half a dozen mat-covered lodges, and around them we perceived about fifteen horses scraping the snow. The stolen ones were among them. We instantly mounted; and before the robbers were aware of our approach we had surrounded their miserable encampment. On hearing the war-whoop of our Oakinagan allies, they rushed out, partly armed; but seeing our numbers, they held down their bows, and quietly submitted. I never saw such a group of meagre wretches. They were quite naked; and

Sharp misery had worn them to the bones.

Their wives and children crouched under mats, and kept up a howling cry, while the Oakinagan chief thus addressed them :

“ Sinapoils ! you are dogs ; you are robbers. You stole the horses from our good friends the white men ; and as a punishment we shall now take away your horses.” One of them replied : “ We are dogs ; we are robbers ; we did steal the good white men’s horses ; but we are poor, and cold, and hungry. The wolves destroyed all our own horses but five ; and as our dried salmon was all gone, and our wives and children starving, sooner than see them die, we took the horses from the white men, because we knew they were good people, and could easily purchase others. We are sorry for what we have done ; but if you take our five remaining horses, we shall all die of hunger.”

This appeal made no impression on the flinty-hearted chief, who counselled us to take the five horses as a punishment to the robbers. I refused however to adopt his advice ; for, independently of the inhumanity of such a course, I did not deem it prudent to resort to measures of severity against a tribe who might have many opportunities of

retaliating on our hunters in the plains. I therefore told them that in consequence of their starving condition, we would abstain from punishing them on that occasion, but any future trespass should not escape with impunity. As they all appeared to want something to eat, I ordered one of their horses to be shot, and leaving the body for their own use, we returned to the fort, which we reached late that evening. Our forbearance produced no expression of gratitude from the Sinapoils; and the chief reproached us for having acted in such a mild manner. I made him and his young men a suitable present, and so ended this pursuit of the 'black-mail' drovers.

As this was the last winter I spent in the Indian country, I shall, before commencing the journal of my voyage across the continent, give some brief remarks on the soil and productions of the various districts on the Columbia, the manners and customs of the different tribes, their distinctive peculiarities, &c.

The climate about the entrance of the river, and thence to the first rapids, is mild. The mercury seldom falls below the freezing point; and never

rises above 80. Westerly winds prevail during the spring and summer months, and are succeeded by north-westers, which blow pretty freshly during the autumn. October ushers in the south wind and rain, both of which continue without intermission until January, when the wind begins to veer to the westward; but the rain seldom ceases until the termination of April. The gentlemen who have wintered at Fort George tell me the torrents which pour down during this period are dreadful. For weeks together the sun is invisible; and the only protection for those whose duty compels them to be in the open air, is a shirt made from the intestines of the sea-lion, the parts of which are ingeniously sewed together with fine threads of *nerf*. A kind of *capuchon*, or hood, is attached to the collar; and when this *garde-pluie* is on, the wearer may bid defiance to the heaviest rain. These shirts are made by the natives in the vicinity of the Russian settlements to the northward of the Columbia, and some of them are neatly ornamented.

Nature has been peculiarly bountiful to the natives of this district; and nothing but the grossest

neglect of her gifts can reduce them to want. The spring months supply them with immense quantities of small fish resembling pilchard, which by Lewis and Clarke are called anchovies. These are smoke-dried, and form an important article of barter with the upper Indians for roots.

From June to the latter end of August they have an abundance of deliciously flavoured salmon, which, from its richness, at first produced a general dysentery among our people.

We found the wild raspberries an excellent remedy for this disorder, which was effectually checked by their astringent qualities.

The months of August and September furnish a plentiful supply of prime sturgeon. This fish attains a great size. Some of those we took were eleven feet in length; and, with the entrails out, weighed from three to four hundred pounds.

This period also produces a variety of wild fruit:—in June, small white strawberries of sweet flavour; these are followed by red and amber raspberries of the ordinary size, but somewhat sour. They are found in moist shady grounds, and grow on bushes from ten to fifteen feet high.

During the months of July, August and September the following kinds of fruit are obtained in considerable quantities: viz. blue-berries, black-berries, wild cherries, gooseberries, wild pears, and a species of bitter crab apple, which cannot be used unless coddled or boiled.

There is an evergreen about the size of a common gooseberry bush, and with small thick leaves resembling laurel. In the month of August it produces abundance of fruit of a small oblong form, which grow in thick clusters. This fruit has an insipid taste, but is looked on as healthy, and great quantities of it may be eaten without injury. It is much esteemed by the natives, who preserve it for their winter use, by making it into small cakes, which are gradually dried before a slow fire.

The country also abounds in various nutritive roots, of which the Indians are extremely fond, and some of which are excellent anti-scorbutics. They collect large quantities of a kind resembling young onions, which, in the first instance, they dry on hot stones. They are then pulverised, and, being worked into a paste, are formed into

loaves from five to six pounds weight, which they lay by for seasons of scarcity. This bread has a taste resembling liquorice. An inferior description of fish resembling salmon is taken in the months of October and November. It is poor, dry, and has an insipid taste. The flesh is white, the teeth long, the snout bent like the beak of a parrot, and it contains very little substance.

The principal quadrupeds are the elk, red deer, black-tailed deer ; the black, brown, and grizzly bear, the last of which is extremely ferocious ; the wolf, panther, tiger-cat, wild-cat, marmot, beaver, land-otter, musk-rat, wood-rat, and, the most valuable of all the fur tribe, the sea-otter. White bears are occasionally killed on the coast to the northward of the Columbia ; but they are scarce.

The most remarkable of the feathered tribe are the black, brown, and nun eagle ; the hawk, pelican, and cormorant ; the swan, heron, crane, bustard, grey and white goose, and various species of wild ducks, &c.

The soil in the valleys consists of a bed of rich black mould, about six inches in depth, which

covers a stratum of grey earth extremely cold. The latter lies on a layer of large gravelly sand ; and under all is a bed of hard flinty stones. On the high grounds, under a thin covering of black mould, are found good quarry stones well adapted for building. There is a bank of white earth resembling chalk to the southward of Point Adams ; and further on, in the same direction, the Indians find red, green, and yellow earths, and a species of heavy shining clay resembling lead-mine. No limestone is found in the neighbourhood.

Few of the various vegetable seeds which were planted came to perfection. The turnips indeed attained a prodigious size. One weighed fifteen pounds and a half, and was thirty-three inches in circumference ; they were in flower at the end of December, and were left in the ground ; but the seeds were destroyed by the mice which infested the garden. The radishes thrived tolerably well ; but owing to the coldness of the earth the potatoes failed the second year.

The trees most common in the neighbourhood of Fort George are the cedar, spruce, pine, alder, &c. The cedars are from twenty to thirty feet in

circumference, and proportionably high. The alders also are extremely large, some of them measuring from twelve to twenty inches in diameter. A few leagues above the fort, ash and oak are found ; the former is of tolerable size ; but the latter, compared with its noble brother in England, is a mere dwarf.

In the 14th chapter, Vol. I, I have referred to the peculiarities, moral qualities, and mechanical ingenuity of the natives who reside about the mouth of the Columbia. Little therefore remains to be said on these subjects. The same kind of houses and canoes, the same flattening of the heads, an equal love of thieving and lying on the part of the men ; shameless profligacy among the women ; the same mode of living, and a similarity in their manner of burial, are observable among the various tribes, from the rapids to the ocean. They all, too, speak the same language, which is decidedly the most unpronounceable compound of gutturals ever formed for the communication of human thoughts, or the expression of human wants. The following are a few of their words :

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <i>Icht</i> , one. | <i>Moolak</i> , a deer. |
| <i>Makust</i> , two. | <i>Equannet</i> , salmon. |
| <i>Thlown</i> , three. | <i>Kaienoult</i> , tobacco. |
| <i>Lakut</i> , four. | <i>Passischqua</i> , a blanket. |
| <i>Quannum</i> , five. | <i>Tillikum</i> , men. |
| <i>Takut</i> , six. | <i>Kamoox</i> , a dog. |
| <i>Sinebakust</i> , seven. | <i>Sakquallal</i> , a gun. |
| <i>Stouktekane</i> , eight. | <i>Mittaight o kok</i> , sit down there. |
| <i>Quaiust</i> , nine. | <i>Tane tse koolama</i> , show me your pipe. |
| <i>Itallilum</i> , ten. | <i>Patlach nain maika?</i> will you give it to me? |
| <i>Ekoun icht</i> , eleven. | |
| <i>Ekoun makust</i> , twelve. | |
| <i>Makust thlalt</i> , twenty. | |

Mr. Franchère, who attained a more thorough knowledge of their language than any one in the Company's service, states that the letters F, V, and others, are not articulated in any of their words. The letter R is also wanting; but some words, pronounced with a thick guttural lisp, such as *chreluit*, approach its sound. The combinations *thl*, *tl*, and *li*, are frequent, and are also very common in the Mexican language.

In proportion as we approach the rapids from the sea, female impurity becomes less perceptible; beyond this point it entirely ceases. I think it necessary to mention this fact, in consequence of

the sweeping censure passed by Lewis and Clarke on all the women between the Rocky Mountains and the sea. The reader must not suppose that I wish to cast any doubt on the general accuracy of those intelligent travellers; indeed, circumstanced as they were, the immense fund of correct and valuable information contained in their journal is surprising; but in this instance they have wandered from the fact.

Having ascended the Columbia nine times, and descended it eight, I had better opportunities of judging of the manners of the natives than those who merely passed up and down; and during those various journeys I never saw the slightest approximation to levity of manners among the women above the rapids.

The two most important rivers which fall into the Columbia below the rapids are the Wallamat, or Multnomah, and the Coweliskee. The entrance of the former is about one hundred miles from the sea, and its general course is a little to the eastward of south. I was merely a few miles above its junction with the Columbia; but Messrs.

Clapp, Franchère, and Halsey, who ascended it a considerable distance, state that it runs through a low well-wooded country for upwards of sixty miles, when the navigation is interrupted by a considerable fall, above which the channel contracts, and the banks become higher and less woody. The climate in the Wallamat is remarkably mild, and not so moist as that on the coast. It possesses a rich and luxuriant soil, which yields an abundance of fruits and roots.* The Indians are tranquil: there are no noxious reptiles: beaver, deer, and elk are plentiful; and when, in the course of time, the improvements of scientific cultivation extend to the Columbia, the country about the Wallamat will be rendered one of the most delightful districts to the westward of the Rocky Mountains. We know little of the Cowe-liskee. It enters the Columbia about half a day's march below the Wallamat from the northward: its banks are high, and thickly wooded, and the

* A few years since the tobacco plant was discovered in the Wallamat. The samples sent home are, I understand, of an excellent description.

current much interrupted by rapids. Our traders, owing to the difficulty of the navigation, did not ascend it more than thirty miles. The tribe who inhabit its banks are called the Skilloots. They are friendly, and differ little from the lower Indians.

CHAPTER VII.

Description of climate, soil, &c. above the rapids—Sketch of various tribes—The Chohoptins—Yackamans—Oakinagans—Sinapoils—Spokans—Anecdote—Pointed-hearts—Cause of war—Cootonais—Kettle Indians—Kamloops, &c.

I HAVE already alluded so often to the natives about the first rapids, and the great falls, that I may here pass them over with a few words explanatory of the causes that induced them to commit so many acts of hostility. In their various contests with the tribes below the former, and above the latter, they were generally the greatest sufferers, owing to the fire-arms which those opposed to them obtained from us in exchange for their furs, horses, &c.

There are no animals of the fur kind in the neighbourhood of the falls, and scarcely any about the rapids :* there is therefore nothing to induce us to establish a trading post at either place ; and as the natives are aware of this, and of their consequent inability to procure fire-arms, &c., they, like the Black-feet, identify us with their old enemies, and allow no opportunity to escape of attacking and robbing us. A small party, unencumbered by merchandise, may pass in safety ; otherwise, as has been already seen, it is a hazardous experiment.

From the falls to the lands of the Spokans the climate is remarkably healthy ; in summer, excessively hot ; in winter, intensely cold ; but subject during these seasons to little variation. A cloud is seldom seen ; and during the various journeys I have made up and down the Columbia, I did not witness in the above space ten rainy days.

The soil is unproductive, and is chiefly a light

* The animals which Lewis and Clarke saw at this place, and which they called sea-otters, are seals. We have killed them as high up as the Dalles below the falls.

yellowish sandy clay. The plains are covered with a short kind of grass, mixed with prickly pears, wormwood, and tufts of long coarse grass from three to four feet high. Patches of clover are here and there visible, and in their vicinity the chapparel, and the camas or quamash roots, mentioned by Lewis and Clarke, are found. Wild onions grow in considerable quantities along the banks of the river above the falls. They are small; and from March to May their flavour is excellent; but after the latter month they lose their relish, and become dry and hard.

Cotton-wood, small willow, sumac, furze, and sarsaparilla, are also found occasionally on the sides of the Columbia; but from the falls, until we approach Spokane River, none of the larger trees are visible. Throughout this distance (about five hundred miles) our only fuel was derived from the timber drifted down by the spring freshes from the upper parts of the Columbia, and which in some particular bends of the river accumulates in great quantities. In other places, however, it is very scarce; and when we could not pur-

chase drift-wood from Indians, we were often obliged to encamp without any fire.

The principal animals are horses, small deer, prairie wolves, red foxes, badgers, polecats, hares, and dogs. Otters are sometimes seen; but the great staple animal, the beaver, is a stranger to this district. The Indians allege that buffaloes were formerly numerous about the plains, and assert that remains of these animals are still found. Between Lewis River and Spokan House we saw many bleached antlers of elk, together with the large curved horns of the sheep which are now found in the vicinity of the Rocky Mountains. These animals have long since fled from the plains. None of the present race of Indians have seen any of them, and are unable to account for their disappearance. We were equally at a loss to divine the cause; and whether the annual burning of the grass by the natives in hunting the deer had any influence in driving them away, I shall leave to the curious in animal emigration to determine.

No rattlesnakes are seen below the falls. A short distance above them these reptiles make

their first appearance, and are numerous as far as the Chaudière falls, a couple of days' march above which they totally disappear. There is in some places a small black snake, the bite of which causes death much quicker than that of the rattlesnake. An old Indian near Oakinagan told me that a child of his, a girl about five years old, one day looking for blue-berries with other children, was bitten by a very small black snake, and died in about an hour afterwards. There are numbers of dark-brown, green, and garter snakes, but they are perfectly innocuous.

I have already spoken of the Wallah Wallahs, and of their friendly disposition. With the exception of the attack in the autumn of 1814, they never manifested any hostility to our people; and we had reason to know the part they took in that transaction was compulsory. The entrance of their river is in lat. $46^{\circ} 4'$. There is scarcely any beaver on their lands; but deer, wild fowl, and roots, are obtained in plenty, and, with the salmon, constitute their principal food. They are a well-formed race, cleanly in their persons, good hunters, and excellent horsemen. The Chohoptins,

or Nez-Percés, differ little from them in their language, customs, or mode of living. The productions of their lands are nearly similar; and they have immense bands of wild and tame horses. They reside principally on the banks of Lewis River, and are a numerous and powerful tribe. They and the Wallah Wallahs are constantly at war with the Shoshonés, or Snake Indians, who inhabit the great plains to the southward. The only cause assigned by the Wallah Wallahs for this war is, that the Snakes interdict them from hunting the black-tailed deer, which are numerous on their lands, and in retaliation they oppose the latter in their endeavours to catch salmon in the Columbia. They allege that this opposition would cease if the Shoshonés abandoned their claim to the exclusive right of hunting the black-tailed deer. As this is a privilege, however, which the latter are not willing to concede, their warfare may be interminable.

The Yackamans are a numerous tribe, who inhabit the lands on the northern banks of the Columbia, from its junction above Lewis River until some distance above a river which flows from the

northward, and is called after the name of the tribe. They are on friendly terms with the Chohoptins and Wallah Wallahs, and make common cause with them against the Shoshonés.

From the falls to this place there is little variation in the dress of the natives. The men wear leathern shirts and gaiters, and the women are covered with shifts of the same material; but a short distance above the Yackaman river, and from thence to Oakinagan, we met during the fishing season some straggling bands, wretchedly poor, and nearly naked. The men are without any garments. The women wear a leathern belt round the waist, from which a narrow slip passes from the front, and is secured behind, something in the manner of the *maro* worn by the male natives of the Sandwich Islands. The rest of their persons is quite naked; and their appearance, particularly that of their old women, is extremely disgusting. They have few horses; and other animals are scarce on their lands.

Continuing our course upwards, we arrive among the Oakinagans, where decency in covering again appears. Of this tribe I have already spoken

sufficiently; and shall therefore merely remark, that although far from cleanly in their lodges, they keep their persons always well covered. The latitude of Oakinagan is $48^{\circ} 6'$ north, and the longitude about 117° west.

The next tribe we meet are the Sinapoils, who occupy a district on the northern banks of the Columbia, between the Spokane and Oakinagan rivers. They subsist principally on salmon and cammas, and sometimes small deer. Beaver is scarce; and they are consequently poorer than the neighbouring tribes, on whose lands that valuable animal abounds. They are dirty and slothful; and, from their habits of dishonesty, are regarded by the other natives with the utmost contempt. From the poverty of their territory no trading post has been hitherto established amongst them. This circumstance has indisposed them towards the white men, and they seized every opportunity of committing depredations on our people. They are however poor in arms, and poorer in spirit; and their aggressions were chiefly confined to petty pilfering and horse-stealing.

The Sinapoils are much addicted to gambling, and its concomitant vice, quarrelling. We could never rightly ascertain whether they had a chief; but from their insubordination, local feuds, and love of thieving, we were inclined to doubt the existence of any controlling authority. They never committed any open act of hostility on us; but this we had good reason to know was occasioned by the manner in which they were kept in check by the friendly tribes of Spokane, Oakinagan, and Kamloops; any of whom would not only willingly take our part, but would punish the assailants with greater severity than we might be inclined to use if left to our own discretion.

In justice however to this unfortunate race, it must be borne in mind that they are tantalised by seeing in the possession of their neighbours the Oakinagans and Spokans various articles which they obtain in exchange for the productions of their more favoured lands; and the Sinapoils therefore cannot resist the temptation, when opportunity offers, to steal from the traders what the poverty of their country prevents them from obtaining honestly.

About forty-five miles above the Sinapoil village, Spokan river joins the Columbia from the eastward. At Oakinagan the plains begin to disappear; and from thence to the Sinapoil lands high naked bluffs predominate. A short distance above the latter place some straggling pines become visible, which increase thence upwards in size and quantity. The Spokans have a small village at the entrance of their river, but their chief and permanent place of residence is about forty miles higher up, where we built our fort, and where the Pointed-heart River joins the Spokan from the south-east. Their lands present a pleasing variety of well-wooded hills, open prairies, and rich flat bottoms, which produce abundance of nutritive roots and wild fruit. Beaver, deer, and various kinds of wild fowl, &c. are occasionally plentiful, while their river supplies them with excellent salmon, trout, and carp. Yet, notwithstanding these advantages, such is their improvidence, that they are often reduced to starvation. In times of scarcity they collect a quantity of pine-moss, which they boil, and form into a kind of black

cake about half an inch thick. It is a horrible preparation, and has a bitter saponaceous taste.

The Spokans are an honest friendly tribe. They are good hunters, but somewhat indolent, fond of gambling, despotic husbands, and indulgent fathers. Their women are great slaves, and most submissive to marital authority. They did not exhibit the same indifference to the superior comforts of a white man's wife as that displayed by the Flat-head women, and some of them consequently became partners of the *voyageurs*. They made excellent wives, and in general conducted themselves with propriety. Although the Spokane men are extremely jealous, and punish with severity any infidelity on the part of their wives, they are themselves not over-scrupulous in their own conduct. We learned from the wives of the *voyageurs*, that female violation is by no means uncommon among them. The frequent journeys which the women in the execution of their laborious duties are obliged to make alone into the woods in search of fuel, roots, &c. afford great facility to the commission of this offence; and the

ravisher depends on impunity from the well-known fear of the woman to tell her husband, who might either abandon her, or, by taking the offender's life, embroil their respective families in a sanguinary contest.

Slavish and submissive as the Spokan women are, they do not all tamely submit to the occasional lapses of their husbands; an instance of which occurred in the summer of 1815, while I was at Spokan House. One of the tribe named *Singhelsasscoghagt*, (or the horse,) from his great swiftness, and dexterity in riding, was a tall and rather handsome Indian. He was remarkable for his gallantries, and it was also whispered among the females that he never spared a woman whom he caught unprotected in the woods. His wife had for some time suspected him of carrying on an intrigue, and, being constantly on the watch, she soon discovered that her suspicions were not groundless. The very night of the discovery, while he was in a profound sleep, she inflicted on him a dreadful injury, of which he died before morning. On the intelligence becoming public, a crowd of his relations assembled round the lodge, to whom

she openly avowed herself as the author of his death, stating at the same time her reasons for committing the dreadful act; but she had scarcely finished when an arrow from her husband's brother quivered in her heart. Her relations instantly collected. Guns, arrows, and tomahawks were in immediate requisition, and before we could arrive to check the bloody conflict, two men and two women had fallen victims. Our presence restored tranquillity; and, as the sufferers on each side were equally divided, we experienced no great difficulty in bringing about a reconciliation, and each party rested satisfied with its respective loss.

The Pointed-hearts, or, as the Canadians call them, *les Cœurs d'Alènes*, (Hearts of Awls,) are a small tribe inhabiting the shores of a lake about fifty miles to the eastward of Spokane House. Their country is tolerably well stocked with beaver, deer, wild-fowl, &c.; and its vegetable productions are similar to those of Spokane. Some of this tribe occasionally visited our fort at the latter place with furs to barter, and we made a few excursions to their lands. We found them uniformly honest in their traffic; but they did not

evinced the same warmth of friendship for us as the Spokans, and expressed no desire for the establishment of a trading post among them. They are in many respects more savage than their neighbours, and I have seen some of them often eat deer and other meat raw. They are also more unfeeling husbands, and frequently beat their wives in a cruel manner.

About twenty years before our arrival, the Spokans and Pointed-hearts were at war, caused by a kind of Trojan origin. A party of the former had been on a hunting visit to the lands of the latter, and were hospitably received. One day a young Spokane discovered the wife of a Pointed-heart alone, some distance from the village, and violated her. Although she might have borne this in silence from one of her own tribe, she was not equally forbearing with regard to a stranger, and immediately informed her husband of the outrage. He lost no time in seeking revenge, and shot the Spokane as he entered the village. The others fled to their own lands, and prepared for war. A succession of sanguinary conflicts followed, in the course of which the greatest war-

riors of both sides were nearly destroyed. At the end of a year, however, hostilities ceased; since which period they have been at peace. The two nations now intermarry, and appear to be on the best terms of friendship.

Leaving the Pointed-hearts, we cross the Flat-head river, and come to the Cootonais, who inhabit a small and beautiful district near the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and about sixty miles to the north-east of the Flat-head lands. It is nearly surrounded by a chain of lofty and thickly-wooded mountains, and is consequently very difficult of access. Beaver is plentiful in this country, and of a superior description. Otters, martens, and bears, are also found, with excellent deer and mountain sheep.*

The Cootonais are the remnant of a once brave and powerful tribe, who, like the Flat-heads, were perpetually engaged in war with the Black-feet for the right of hunting on the buffalo grounds. Previous to our arrival among them they entertained the most deadly hatred against white men, to whom they attributed all their misfortunes,

* The tobacco plant has lately been discovered in this district.

owing to the assistance which their enemies received in arms and ammunition from the Northwest Company's people to the eastward of the mountains.

They appeared to be perfectly aware that beaver was the only object that induced us to visit their country; and they accordingly exerted themselves to procure it, not, as some of them candidly declared, for our interest, but for the purpose of obtaining fire-arms, spears, &c. to enable them to meet their old enemies the Black-feet on more equal terms.

They are a very peculiar tribe. Their language bears no affinity whatever to that of any of the western nations. It is infinitely softer and more free from those unpronounceable gutturals so common among the lower tribes. As with the Flat-heads, buffalo is the cause of all their misfortunes; for, although, as I have before mentioned, their lands abound in plenty of other animals, their hereditary attachment to the buffalo is so unconquerable, that it drives them every year to the plains, where they come in contact with the Black-feet. In these contests they are generally

victors, but they always return with diminished numbers. They have latterly entered into a kind of alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Flat-heads, by which they have agreed that neither party shall make peace with the Black-feet until the latter shall permit them to hunt without molestation on the buffalo plains. As this is a concession not likely to be granted, it is probable that the war will terminate only with the extermination of one or other of the parties.

The Cootonais are by no means so warm-hearted towards the whites as their neighbours the Flat-heads; but Mr. Montour, who spent some years among them, states, that they are strictly honest in all their dealings, and remarkable for their adherence to truth; a virtue, by the bye, of which few Indians can boast. Polygamy is unknown among them; and he never knew an instance wherein any of their women admitted overtures of an improper nature. They appear to be jealous of white men, and studiously conceal their females whenever any of the traders approach their lodges.

A Cootonais seldom smiles. He thinks that

sooner or later he is doomed to fall in the field of battle; and this certainty of death, joined to the number of relatives annually killed in their constant warfare, imparts to his features a settled melancholy.

The greatest cleanliness and neatness are observable about their persons and lodges. They are rather handsome, above the middle size, and, compared with other tribes, remarkably fair. On the whole, we may say of this interesting people, that, in their intercourse with white men, they are rather haughty and reserved; in conversation, candid; in trade, honest; brave in battle; and devotedly attached to each other and their country. The trading post established among the Cootonais is situated in about $49^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude, and 115° west longitude.

The Chaudières or Kettle Indians, and the small band under the hermaphrodite chief, are mentioned in the First Volume, together with the productions of their respective lands. The Chaudière fall is situated in $48^{\circ} 37'$ north latitude, and the longitude, by chronometer, is about 116° west.

A small tribe exists on the upper lakes of the

Columbia, which wanders about in straggling parties of three, four, or five each. They appear to be timid in approaching white people, but are not unfriendly. They have no horses, are poor hunters, go nearly naked, and subsist principally on fish.

About one hundred and fifty miles to the northwest of Oakinagan, in the direction of Thompson's River, the Company has a post established among a tribe called the Kamloops, to which there is a communication by land, or by means of the Oakinagan river and lake. Beaver is rather plentiful in this quarter; and, with salmon, constitutes their chief riches. They have few horses, and deer are scarce on their lands. Messrs. La Rocque and M'Donald, who wintered among them, state that the Kamloops are less friendly than any tribe among whom we had posts established. They are addicted to thieving and quarrelling, wear little covering, and are extremely dirty in their persons. Like other tribes, they are subject to occasional famine, owing to their neglecting to provide in the fishing season a sufficiency of salmon for the periods of scarcity.

Beyond Kamloops to the northward the department of New Caledonia commences, inhabited by a tribe called the Carriers; of whom I have given a sketch in a letter from Mr. John Stuart. A more comprehensive description of their country, its productions, &c., will be found in the Appendix.

From the upper parts of the Columbia and its subordinate streams, to the lower falls, the natives inter their dead in a similar manner to that which I have described among the Spokans. From the falls to the lower rapids the bodies of the deceased are enveloped in mats and skins, and placed in cemeteries in a retired situation; one of which is described in the early part of the First Volume. Thence to the mouth of the river the dead are placed in canoes in the manner mentioned in my sketch of the Chinooks.

They all believe in a future state of rewards and punishments. Their moral code differs but little from that of the Flat-heads. The articles of food, clothing, &c., most in use amongst them while living, they hope also to enjoy in the abodes of future happiness; while, in their place of punish-

ment, cold, hunger, and thirst, await the bad people.

There is one item in the Oakinagan creed relative to future torments, which is, I imagine, peculiar to that tribe. An evil spirit, with face, arms, and legs like a man, and a long tail and ears like a horse, jumps about from tree to tree with a stick in his hand, with which he unmercifully belabours all the condemned, who are prevented by the agility of his movements from touching him. This is an additional punishment to what all other tribes believe their wicked will have to suffer.

We never brought ardent spirits amongst them for the purposes of barter, and therefore cannot say how far an abundance of it would have seduced them to its intemperate use; but the few whom we knew to have tasted any did not seem to relish it, except on one occasion that we gave a few glasses to old Illimspokanee, the chief of the Spokans. He staggered home in a state of intoxication, and in a couple of days returned and begged for a little more of the "strong water" (rum); but as we did not wish to encourage its consumption by the Indians, and were apprehensive of the

evil effects which his example might produce, we refused to give him any more, alleging that our stock was exhausted.

The treatment of the women differs materially among the various tribes. Where food is principally obtained by the exertions of the men (as among the Cootonais, Flat-heads, Spokans, &c.) the women are condemned to great drudgery. When a hunter kills a deer, he merely cuts out the tongue, or takes enough for a meal, and on returning to his lodge despatches his wife for the body. She is guided to the spot by notches which he has made in the trees. She also collects firewood, carries water, cooks, makes and cleans his shirts, prepares the meat and fish for curing, &c. They possess little or no influence, and, notwithstanding their laborious duties, seem perfectly contented. Among the lower tribes, however, where their exertions in collecting the Wappitoo roots contribute to the general support, they assume an air of liberty and independence quite unknown among the upper natives; and in all cases of importance the elderly women equally with the men are consulted.

From the foregoing brief sketch it will be seen that those qualities which may be ranked among the virtues, are more conspicuous among the warlike tribes of the Cootonais and Flat-heads than among those lower down. With the exception of slips of red cloth, or a few feathers adorning their heads, they enter the field of battle perfectly naked,

Pride in their port, defiance in their eye.

Their bravery is pre-eminent:—a love of truth they think necessary to a warrior's character. They are too proud to be dishonest, too candid to be cunning. Their many avocations leave them no leisure for gambling; and their strict subordination, joined to the necessity of exerting all their energies against the common enemy, prevents them from quarrelling.

Here I may close my account of the occurrences, &c. which came under my observation during my residence on the Columbia and its tributary streams. A few characteristic sketches of the Canadians, half-breeds, Iroquois, &c. will appear in the Appendix; together with an interesting description of New Caledonia, and a state-

ment of various circumstances which occurred subsequent to my quitting the Indian country, and the insertion of which here would, I imagined, have broken in on the chronological order of my narrative.

Towards the latter end of March, 1817, the other wintering parties joined us at Oakinagan, from whence we all proceeded to Fort George, which we reached on the 3d of April.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ascent of the Columbia—Its lakes—Dangerous navigation—
High water—Arrive at the mountains—Melancholy detail
of the death of six of the party.

WEDNESDAY, April 16th, 1817. At one P. M. on this day we took our departure from Fort George under a salute of seven guns. Our party consisted of eighty-six souls, and was perhaps the largest and most mixed that ever ascended the Columbia. In it were five Scotchmen, two English, and one Irish; thirty-six Canadians, twenty Iroquois Indians, two Nipisings, one Cree, and three half-breeds; nine natives of the Sandwich Islands; with one boy, a servant, two women, and two children. The whole embarked in two barges and nine canoes, (two of which were of bark,)

each containing on an average twenty-two packages, each weighing ninety pounds.

Owing to a strong head-breeze, we were unable to double Tongue-point, on the west side of which we were obliged to encamp in view of the fort. We remained here on the 17th and 18th, during which days it blew a perfect hurricane from the eastward, accompanied by heavy showers. Our tents were repeatedly blown down ; and we might have suffered severely from the incessant rain, had not the governor of Fort George considerably despatched to us an additional quantity of port and rum, with which we succeeded in neutralising the overpowering humidity of the atmosphere.

The wind having moderated on the morning of the 19th, we resumed our voyage after breakfast. We had occasional showers during the day, and passed some scattered lodges of natives, from whom we purchased a quantity of excellent sturgeon. Encamped a little after five o'clock on Oak Point.

We embarked at day-break on the 20th, with calm weather : purchased a quantity of sturgeon.

Towards evening a smart breeze sprung up in our favour, which enabled us to hoist sail; and we continued on in fine style until five, when we encamped at the village of Kyeassino, a friendly chief, a short distance below the mouth of the Multnomah or Wallamut. We had a few slight showers during the day.

On the 21st we arose with the dawn, and embarked. Some of the canoes having struck on sunken trees, we were obliged to put ashore for a couple of hours to repair the damage and dry the goods. We encamped at dusk about five miles above *La Prairie du Thé*, so called by the Canadians from a species of mint which grows in it, and which they are fond of using as a substitute for tea. Passed a few lodges of Indians, but did not stop. Weather same as yesterday.

The morning of the 22nd was cloudy and chilly, with a slight head-breeze, which lasted nearly the entire day. We however made good way; and at three P. M. arrived at the foot of the rapids. Made two discharges, and passed them *sans accident*. Encamped at sun-set at the west end of the portage. As this was the scene of several attacks,

we formed a strong barricade of canoes and goods about the encampment, and divided the party into three watches. Several of the natives visited us. The men were unarmed and well-behaved; and the females appeared solicitous to bestow their favours on some of our people. They appeared somewhat surprised and offended to find that love had no influence in our camp; and left us late in the evening, evidently chagrined at their reception.

The night passed over quietly; and we commenced the portage at day-break, on the morning of the 24th, with cool calm weather. The Indians behaved very friendly, and offered their services to assist in carrying the goods. We did not think it prudent to refuse them, and at half-past ten the portage was cleared. We breakfasted at the upper end, and purchased a few salmon from the natives, to whom we gave the usual present of tobacco; after which we proceeded on. The weather during the day was extremely warm for the season. Put ashore once to repair the canoes, and encamped late in the evening at the point of the Mangy Dog.

The weather continuing calm, we embarked at half-past one on the morning of the 24th; but owing to the darkness, several of our canoes struck on sunken rocks and trees, which compelled us to put ashore at day-light to repair the damage. At nine we proceeded on, and doubled Cape Horn in calm weather; a circumstance of very rare occurrence in voyages on the Columbia.

At three P. M. arrived at the *Dalles* (narrows), and immediately began the portage, but were only enabled to get half through it, when we encamped. The young chief, and the old chieftainess, accompanied by several Indians, paid us a visit. They were unarmed, and conducted themselves peaceably.

We finished the portage at ten o'clock on the morning of the 25th, and breakfasted before embarking; after which we continued on, with a strong breeze in our favour. Passed several dangerous points; and with much difficulty, owing to the low state of the water, we succeeded in making our way without unloading, through the narrow channel to the right of the small *Dalles*. At four P. M. we encamped at the foot of the

Great Falls on the south side. A few Indians crossed over to our encampment; but the weather being wet and stormy, they shortly after returned.

26th. It blew a strong gale the greater part of last night; but moderated at day-break, when we crossed to the north side, and commenced the portage, which we finished in two pauses. We purchased twenty dogs for the kettle. None of the natives who came to us were armed, and we never observed them so tranquil. Our number, however, was sufficient to insure us a respectful reception among any single tribe of the Columbia. Mr. Mackenzie wrote a letter here to Fort George, which he intrusted to one of the chiefs, who promised to have it safely conveyed to its destination. On quitting this place we distributed a quantity of leaf-tobacco among the Indians, who crowded round the canoes, eagerly expecting this last act of our friendship. It was past eleven when we embarked. We had a strong breeze in our favour all day, and passed several bad rapids. Encamped late, a short distance above John Day's River; so called from its having been the place at which that hunter was attacked.

bid adieu to the loaded canoes, and the gentlemen of the Columbia. It consisted of Messrs. Bethune, M'Dougall, Joseph M'Gillivray, Alexander M'Tavish, and myself; with sixteen men, Holmes the tailor, and the boy Perrault, in two canoes. Encamped about three leagues below Pacquin's Rapid. Fine weather all day.

5th. Breakfasted at the above rapid; at which we were constrained to unload part of the lading, and about noon arrived at the portage of the Rocky Island Rapid.

While Gingras and Landreville were getting one of the canoes up the rapid, the latter made a false stroke of his pole, by which it missed bottom, and the canoe was upset in the middle of the waves. Gingras held fast by the bars until it was drawn into an eddy, when he found bottom, and got ashore. In the mean time eight men leaped into the other canoe, and instantly pushed off to the assistance of Landreville, who was for a couple of minutes invisible; when at length, appearing above the surface of the water, they seized him by the hair, and drew him on board nearly lifeless. All our baggage was subsequently picked

up; and we remained here the remainder of the day to dry it, and repair the canoes. A few poor Indians visited us. They had no provisions to trade, and appeared to be more in want of food and clothing than any I had ever seen. One old woman in particular was completely naked, and presented a most disgusting appearance.

Nothing of consequence occurred on the 6th or 7th; and about sun-set on the 8th, we reached Oakinagan Fort, where we passed the night.

At four P. M. we bid adieu to Oakinagan, having previously killed two horses, the flesh of which we took with us. Encamped a short distance above the road leading to Spokane House. The weather, for the last few days, was remarkably mild. It changed, however, on the 10th; on which day we had incessant rain. We encamped three leagues above *la Rapide d'Ignace*.

On Sunday the 11th we embarked at day-break. The late rain gave the country a most refreshing appearance; and along the banks of the river we pulled a quantity of small wild onions, which grew in great abundance, both among the

rocks, and in the low bottoms. Encamped five miles below the entrance of Sinapoil River, a small stream which falls into the Columbia from the north. Weather rather sultry.

The men had hard work on the 12th. Owing to the sudden rise of the water, caused by the late rain and melting of the snows, we were obliged to disembark several times during the day, to allow the canoes to be dragged up with lines. Encamped opposite the entrance to Spokane River. The country from Oakinagan to this place is quite devoid of wood, but the banks of the river are bold, and in many places rocky. This naturally, contracts the river into a more narrow compass, and makes the current much more difficult to stem.

We began, the morning of the 13th, by making a portage above our encampment; after which we breakfasted, and pursued our route. We had a strong smooth current all day, and encamped on the south side a few leagues below the Grand Rapid. From Spokane River, upwards, the banks of the Columbia are rather thickly wooded, and present a very picturesque appearance. There

are also several rich bottoms of red and white clover, and some aromatic herbs,

Wasting their sweetness on the desert air.

Met a couple of families of poor beggarly Indians.
Very sultry weather all day.

14th. On arriving at the Grand Rapid we were forced to carry the canoes, as well as the baggage, to the upper end. This occupied the greater portion of the day, and we did not finish it before three p. m. At four we arrived at the Great Kettle Falls, the portage of which we completed at sun-set. Encamped at the upper end of the falls; shortly after which an Indian arrived from Spokane House with letters from Mr. M'Donald, which contained no intelligence of interest.

Embarked at the usual hour, on the 15th, and made pretty good way until one p. m., when we arrived at a particular part of the river, called the First Dalles, or narrows, above the Kettle Falls, where the channel is confined between a range of high and dangerous rocks, nearly a mile in extent; the whole of which distance the men were obliged to carry the canoes and baggage. Encamped at

la Rivière de Beliers, so called from some mountain sheep having been killed near the spot by our hunters some years before. The Indians assert that no rattlesnakes are to be found on either bank of the Columbia above this river ; and all our men, who had been previously in the employment of the Company, hunting in that part, fully corroborated this statement. The *Rivière de Beliers* comes from the north-west.

About seven o'clock on the morning of the 16th we passed the mouth of the Flat-head River, which falls into the Columbia over a foaming cascade, caused by a large collection of immense rocks, which choke up the entrance. During the day we passed a number of small rivers, which, owing to the melting of the snow, caused by the excessive heat, had been swollen into torrents. The force of the current rushing out from these rivers repeatedly drove the canoes back with great violence, and it required all the skill and strength of our men to pass them. Encamped late, near M'Gillivray's River, a fine bold stream, which takes its rise in the Rocky Mountains, and running in nearly a north-east direction, through

the Cootonias lands, here joins the Columbia. A refreshing breeze from the north sprung up in the evening. The country on each side, from the Kettle Falls to this place, is thickly wooded, principally with pine, spruce, and small birch. The northern shore is rather low; but the south side presents a bold rocky appearance. About an hour before we encamped we observed a large black bear in the act of swimming across the river, which Mr. M'Gillivray wounded. The enraged animal instantly changed its course downwards, and came in contact with our canoe, into which it attempted to get, by seizing the gunwale with its fore paws. This nearly upset us; but the foreman aimed a well-directed blow at his head with his pole, which completely stunned it, and we succeeded in hauling it on board. It was in rather good condition, and proved a welcome and unexpected treat.

17th. Set off a little before sun-rise; and about an hour afterwards entered the first lake formed by the Columbia. It is between eleven and twelve leagues long, and about one and a half in breadth; the current smooth and steady, and pretty free

from snags or sunken trees. The shores are bold and well wooded with a variety of timber of fine size ; and in the distance we first caught a view of the most western chain of the Rocky Mountains covered with snow. A head-wind, during the greater part of the day, considerably retarded our progress ; and we encamped late, near the upper end of the lake, where a few Indians visited us. They appeared to be very poor, and brought about a dozen beaver skins to trade, which we told them we could not purchase, as we were obliged to cross the mountains ; but that our party, going downwards in the autumn, would stop a few days with them, and trade all the skins they had. They were rather disappointed ; but a little tobacco, and some trifling presents, sent them away in good humour.

Shortly after, embarking on the morning of the 18th, we left the lake, and entered that part of the river called the Straits, which separates the Upper from the Lower Lake. It is only a few miles in length, and quickly brought us to the upper lake, which is not so long as the first. The high hills in its immediate vicinity were covered

with snow; the chilling influence of which we sensibly experienced by the cold blasts from shore. Encamped at sun-set at the upper end of the lake, on a fine sandy beach. During the day we struck on two sand-banks, and were slightly injured by a sunken tree. Saw no Indians.

19th. About two miles above our encampment of last night the Columbia becomes very narrow, with steep and thickly wooded banks, covered with immense quantities of fallen trees. The current is very strong, and, owing to the great height of the water, the men at intervals had scarcely any beach on which to walk in dragging up the canoes. Our progress was consequently slow; and we put ashore for the night about fifteen miles above the lake.

At nine o'clock on the morning of the 20th we reached the Second Dalles, or narrows, which are formed by a contraction of the channel of the river into a very small compass. There are high and slippery rocks on each side, which makes it a work of great danger and difficulty to pass them. The baggage was all carried

by the men, and the canoes were towed up with strong lines, after being in great danger of filling from the frightful whirlpools close along the shore. The weather became much cooler from the proximity of the mountains. Several patches of snow were observable on the beach during the day, and towards evening some rain fell.

From dawn of day until noon on the 21st we did not make three miles, owing to the impetuosity of the current, the shelving banks, and the extreme weakness of our men, several of whom were knocked up. We were detained at one place upwards of four hours to repair our shattered canoes, and encamped about six o'clock on a low gravelly point. We had several smart showers during the afternoon.

22d. About two P.M. arrived at a place called the Upper Dalles, where the river is again confined for a considerable distance between a line of high slippery rocks. Got about half way through this channel, and stopped for the night in a small nook formed by the rocks, on which we lay scattered and exposed to severe rain during the night.

We rose wet and unrefreshed on the morning of the 23d, and in five hours passed the Dalles, the upper part of which consists of a chain of whirlpools, which compelled us to carry both canoes and baggage some distance over the rocks; in the execution of which duty, some of the men narrowly escaped with their lives. Those who carried our canoe, from mere exhaustion fell several times, by which it was much damaged; and we were detained until 3 P. M. to get it repaired. Encamped at dusk on a sandy beach, for which we had been some time on the look-out. The rain continued during the evening and the night to pour down in torrents.

Our progress on the 24th was equally slow. The various tributary streams which we passed on this and the last two days, and which take their rise from the surrounding mountains, had by the recent rains been swollen into torrents, the waters of which, as they rushed with headlong force into the Columbia, repeatedly drove us back with irresistible strength, and at times we were in danger of filling. On two occasions, where the opposite shore of the Columbia con-

sisted of perpendicular rocks, we were obliged, after various fruitless attempts to pass the minor streams, to unload and carry the canoes and baggage some distance along their banks until we reached a smooth space of current, when we crossed, and by that means surmounted the difficulties of their respective embouchures. It rained on us all the afternoon.

25th. Nothing of importance occurred on this day to vary the disagreeable tedium of our journey. The foreman, steersman, and four of the middlemen of our canoe were quite knocked up; while those in the other canoe were comparatively strong and healthy:—indeed the distribution of the men was grossly partial, and was productive in the sequel of the most deplorable consequences. It rained hard all day; and on retiring to rest we had not a dry article of covering about us.

On the 26th we only made three miles, in the course of which our canoe filled in a dangerous rapid, and we were near perishing. We succeeded however in gaining a low stony island, on which there was no wood to light a fire: our pemmican was completely damaged by the late accident; and,

as a climax to our misery, it rained incessantly the whole day.

The river here opened out to a considerable breadth, and in some places was very shallow. The Rocky Mountain portage at which we were to leave our canoes appeared in sight, and was not more than three miles distant. As we threw our jaded bodies on our stony couch this evening, we most truly experienced that

Weariness can snore upon the flint,

When restive sloth makes the down-pillow hard.

We rose at the usual hour on the 27th, and at nine A.M. arrived at the entrance of Canoe River, where the portage commences, and with indescribable pleasure we bade a final adieu to our crazy battered canoe. Messrs. M'Dougall and Bethune had reached it the day before, and had almost despaired of seeing us. Finding so many of our men invalids, those gentlemen deemed it imprudent to bring them across the mountains, the fatigues of which they would not be able to encounter. Six Canadians, and Holmes the English tailor, were therefore sent back in the best canoe to Spokane

House. Out of the seven men, two only were able to work ; but, as the current was in their favour, it was hoped they would arrive in three days at the Kettle Falls, from whence they could easily reach Spokane. As our stock of provisions was very scanty, we could only spare them enough for the above period. On separating from their comrades, some of them appeared dejected and melancholy, and foreboded that they would never see Canada again. Their prophecy, alas ! was but too true.

* I did not hear the fate of this unfortunate party until three years afterwards. The following is the melancholy detail. On leaving the Rocky Mountains, they drove rapidly down the current until they arrived at the Upper Dalles or narrows, where they were obliged to disembark. A cod-line was made fast to the stern of the canoe, while two men preceded it along the banks with poles to keep it from striking against the rocks. It had not descended more than half the distance, when it was caught in a strong whirlpool, and the line snapped. The canoe for a moment disappeared in the vortex ; on emerging from which, it was carried by the irresistible force of the current to the opposite side, and dashed to pieces against the rocks. They had not the prudence to take out either their blankets or small quantity of provisions, which were of course all lost. Here then the poor fellows found themselves deprived of all the necessaries of life, and at a period of the year in which it was impossible to procure any wild fruit or roots. To return

to the mountains was impossible, and their only chance of preservation was to proceed downwards, and to keep as near the banks of the river as circumstances would permit. The continual rising of the water had completely inundated the beach, in consequence of which they were compelled to force their way through an almost impervious forest, the ground of which was covered with a strong growth of prickly underwood. Their only nourishment was water; owing to which, and their weakness from fatigue and ill health, their progress was necessarily slow. On the third day poor Maçon died, and his surviving comrades, though unconscious how soon they might be called on to follow him, determined to keep off the fatal moment as long as possible. They therefore divided his remains in equal parts between them, on which they subsisted for some days. From the swollen state of their feet their daily progress did not exceed two or three miles. Holmes, the tailor, shortly followed Maçon, and they continued for some time longer to sustain life on his emaciated body. It would be a painful repetition to detail the individual death of each man. Suffice it to say that in a little time, of the seven men, two only, named La Pierre and Dubois, remained alive. La Pierre was subsequently found on the borders of the upper lake of the Columbia by two Indians who were coasting it in a canoe. They took him on board, and brought him to the Kettle Falls, from whence he was conducted to Spokane House.

He stated that, after the death of the fifth man of the party, Dubois and he continued for some days at the spot where he had ended his sufferings, and on quitting it they loaded themselves with as much of his flesh as they could carry; that with this they succeeded in reaching the upper lake, round the shores of which they wandered for some time in vain in search of Indians; that their horrid food at length became exhausted, and they were again reduced to the prospect of starvation: that on the second night after their last meal, he (La Pierre)

observed something suspicious in the conduct of Dubois, which induced him to be on his guard; and that shortly after they had lain down for the night, and while he feigned sleep, he observed Dubois cautiously opening his clasp knife, with which he sprung on him, and inflicted on his hand the blow that was evidently intended for his neck. A silent and desperate conflict followed, in which, after severe struggling, La Pierre succeeded in wresting the knife from his antagonist, and having no other resource left, he was obliged in self-defence to cut Dubois' throat; and that a few days afterwards he was discovered by the Indians as before mentioned. Thus far nothing at first appeared to impugn the veracity of his statement; but some other natives subsequently found the remains of two of the party near those of Dubois, mangled in such a manner as to induce them to think that they had been murdered; and as La Pierre's story was by no means consistent in many of its details, the proprietors judged it advisable to transmit him to Canada for trial. Only one Indian attended: but as the testimony against him was merely circumstantial, and unsupported by corroborating evidence, he was acquitted.

CHAPTER IX.

Canoe Valley and River—Appearance of mountains—M'Gillivray's Rock—Dangerous situation of party on a raft—Arrive at Rocky Mountain House—Volcanic appearances—Animals, &c.—Indian tradition respecting Mammoth—Difference in size of trees.

Our baggage and provisions were divided between the nine remaining men, who in consequence of the number we had sent back, were obliged to carry about ninety pounds weight each, besides their own kits, which in such cases are never taken into consideration.

Canoe River, which here joins the Columbia, is one of its principal sources, and is situated in lat. 52° 7' 9" N. In the dry season, it is broad but

very shallow, and near its entrance spreads over several sandy shoals.

On the morning of the 28th of May at ten o'clock we set off on foot along the banks of Canoe River, which winds its way through a wide and cheerless valley. We had not proceeded far when we found it impossible, from the great rise of the water, to pass the ordinary fords. It appeared like a lake, and completely set at nought the topographical knowledge of our guide. This obliged us to strike into the woods, our progress through which was extremely fatiguing, and at three p. m. we bivouacked about two miles beyond a long woody point, which stretches some distance across the valley. The weather was cloudy all day, with slight showers, which, during the night, increased to heavy rain, from which we had no shelter.

✓ We rose early on the morning of the 29th of May, in no very enviable situation. A thick mist still enveloped us, and rendered the awful solitude of this gloomy valley peculiarly impressive. It appeared never to have been trodden by the foot of man, until the enterprising spirit of British

commerce, after having forced its way over the everlasting snows of the Rocky Mountains, penetrated into the anti-social glen, and from thence entered the mighty waters of the Columbia. As the mists gradually ascended into the higher regions, we obtained a more distinct view of the surrounding scenery. On the northern side tiers of mountains, thickly covered with large pine and cedar, towered to an immeasurable height; while the southern presented dark perpendicular rocks of immense altitude, partially covered with moss, stunted pine, &c., over which at intervals cascades of seven or eight hundred feet high forced a passage to swell the torrent below. The sun, except in the intervals between the rocks, was invisible; and, with the exception of our own party, no trace of animated nature could be distinguished in this magnificent solitude.

About eleven A. M. we passed a second woody point, which runs into the valley from the north side; and at two P. M. stopped for the remainder of the day. The men were much fatigued from their heavy loads, and some of them were hardly able to proceed.

We set off at day-break on the 30th, sometimes skirting, and at others fording the river. At seven A. M. we arrived at a particular part, called the *grande traverse*, owing to its great depth and breadth. To cross this was a measure of much danger. We all advanced in line, the tallest and strongest mixed alternately with the lowest, each holding the other firmly by the hand. This arrangement was peculiarly necessary; for during our progress several of the smaller men were swept off their legs by the force of the current, and would inevitably have perished, but for the support they derived from their stronger brethren. We effected the passage between eight and nine, when we were obliged to stop to dry our clothes, and breakfast. After this, which did not occupy much time, we proceeded on, and about noon encamped within a short distance of the *grande cote*, or principal hill which we have to ascend in passing from the Columbia.—Weather charming all day.

Shortly after dawn on the morning of the 31st we commenced the steep ascent of the first great hill. At its base were cedar and pine trees of enormous magnitude; but, in proportion as we as-

cended, they decreased in size, and at the summit of the hill their appearance was quite dwarfish. We completed the ascent in about four hours and a half, and did not find it so difficult as we had anticipated. This however may be attributed to our having commenced the task early in the morning.

A short time before we reached the summit, and from thence to the level of the table land, our progress lay through a wilderness of deep snow, which we had to beat down to form a pathway for the loaded men. This work, owing to the holes into which several of the party occasionally fell, was both fatiguing and dangerous.

At one P. M. we arrived at two small lakes between which we encamped. They are only a few hundred feet each in circumference, and the distance between them does not exceed twenty-five or thirty feet. They lie on the most level part of the height of land, and are situated between an immense cut of the Rocky Mountains. From them two rivers take their rise, which pursue different courses, and fall into separate oceans: the first winds into the valley we had lately left, and,

after joining the upper part of the Columbia, empties itself into the North Pacific ; while the other, called the Rocky Mountain River, a branch of the *Athabasca*, follows first an eastern and then a northern course, until it forms a junction with the *Unjiga* or Peace River. This falls into Great Slave Lake, the waters of which are ultimately carried by M'Kenzie's River to the Arctic Ocean.

/ The country round our encampment presented the wildest and most terrific appearance of desolation that can be well imagined. The sun shining on a range of stupendous glaciers, threw a chilling brightness over the chaotic mass of rocks, ice, and snow, by which we were surrounded. Close to our encampment one gigantic mountain of a conical form towered majestically into the clouds far above the others,* while at intervals the interest of the scene was heightened by the rumbling noise of a descending *avalanche* ; which, after being detached from its bed of centuries, increased in bulk in its headlong career downwards, until it

* This is called M'Gillivray's Rock, in honour of the late Mr. Wm. M'Gillivray, a principal director of the Company.

burst with a frightful crash, more resembling the explosion of a magazine than the dispersion of a mass of snow.

One of our rough-spun unsophisticated Canadians, after gazing upwards for some time in silent wonder, exclaimed with much vehemence, "I'll take my oath, my dear friends, that God Almighty never made such a place!"

Sunday June 1. Set off about an hour before day-break in deep snow; and at nine o'clock, having arrived at its termination, we stopped to breakfast. For the last few miles this lofty valley widens considerably, and permits the sun to act with greater effect, in consequence of which the snow quickly disappears beneath its all-dissolving influence. At eleven A. M. we reached a charming spot of rich meadow ground called by our hunters *l'encampement du fusil*, in which we found five of the Company's horses quietly grazing. Their harness was placed in a conspicuous situation adjoining a large fire, the remains of which were burning at the period of our arrival. These horses had been sent to meet us from our establishment at the east end of the mountains, and, from the fresh traces

about the fire, we judged that the persons to whose care they had been intrusted had only left that morning. They proved an acceptable relief to our poor men, who quickly transferred to them their loads; after which we resumed our journey with great spirits, and encamped at four P. M. on the banks of the mountain stream, which for the last few leagues begins to assume the appearance of an important river.

Took advantage of the refreshing coolness of the morning of the 2nd, and advanced some miles before sun-rise. Stopped twice during the day to refresh the horses, and at two P. M., after passing through a thick wood of small pine a few miles in length, we arrived on the banks of the Rocky Mountain river, at a particular spot called the *Traverse du Trou*, where it was necessary for our party to cross. All hands immediately set about preparing a raft, which was quickly constructed. The river at the crossing-place was between three and four hundred yards wide, with a gentle current running smoothly about a quarter of a mile in length, when it is broken by a broad and rather shallow rapid. The horses were first sent over,

and gained the opposite bank in safety. Four men then embarked on the raft with part of the baggage; but owing to their having lost bottom too soon with their poles, the raft was carried in a few minutes into the rapid, where it became entangled among the rocks. The place was fortunately shallow, and they succeeded after some difficulty in gaining the shore. The raft was lost, and we were therefore obliged to construct another. I embarked on it in company with Messrs. M'Gillivray and M'Dougall, Gingras the guide, Louis, an Iroquois Indian, and a half-breed lad named Perrault. We took with us the remainder of the baggage. After pushing off, we poled away with might and main, and had crossed two-thirds of the river, when, on the point of entering an eddy, which would have brought us out of all danger, we lost bottom with our poles, and were carried almost instantaneously into the rapid, through which we were driven a short distance, when we were brought up by the rocks, on which one end of the raft became fast. Gingras instantly jumped over, and quickly gained the shore. One of the men, who had crossed over first, immediately came off to us with

a line for the purpose of trying to secure the raft until the baggage could be transported ashore. Having fastened one end, he returned, accompanied by Perrault, each carrying heavy bundles. This however lightened the raft so much, that it instantly swung round; the line, one end of which was held by the Canadian, snapped in two, and before we had time to look about us, we found ourselves again descending the rapid. All hands immediately jumped overboard, and seized the raft, in the hope of stopping its progress; but the overpowering strength of the current baffled all our puny efforts. We might as well have attempted to arrest the flight of an eagle, or stop a cannon ball in its career. M'Gillivray, Louis, and I, after receiving some severe contusions, succeeded in regaining the raft; but M'Dougall parted company, and having clambered up the sides of a craggy rock, which was a few feet above the surface of the water, remained perched on its summit for some hours, in a most pitiable condition, from which he was not extricated until late in the evening.

Only three of us now remained, and we had

neither pole nor paddle, by which we could guide our course. We quickly cleared the rapid; but had scarcely time to breathe an aspiration of thanksgiving, when we were hurried into another, from which we again escaped harmless. On emerging from this we were forced with inconceivable rapidity through a succession of cascades and rapids, two miles in extent; in the course of which, owing to our repeatedly striking on the rocks, the timbers began to separate. A brief space of smooth water at length appeared, and we once more indulged a faint hope of escape, when a loud and roaring noise announced the immediate vicinity of a cataract. The current became swifter. I looked in vain for relief to my two companions. But neither the active mind of my friend M'Gillivray, ever fertile in resources, nor the long experience of the Iroquois, accustomed from his infancy to similar scenes, could suggest any chance of escape. The thunders of the cataract now dinned in our ears; the spray from the boiling abyss began to envelope us; and every succeeding moment diminished the slight hopes which had hitherto occasionally shot across our

bewildered senses. An attempt to describe my feelings would be vain. The frightful rapidity of the current, joined to the apprehension of instant annihilation, banished even the recollection of "kindred home," which, for a moment, obtruded itself on my imagination. With hope fled despair, and in silent resignation we awaited our fate; but at the moment when it appeared inevitable, the sharp eye of M'Gillivray observed that the raft was caught by a counter current immediately above the fall. He had a small stick, with which he sounded, and found the depth did not exceed three feet. He instantly jumped overboard, followed by Louis and myself; and with a little exertion we succeeded in dragging the raft into an eddy, free from the influence of the great body of water, from whence we easily brought it to shore without the loss of a single article! Our companions on shore, after we had been carried out of their sight, had abandoned all hopes of ever seeing us again, and were therefore agreeably surprised at finding us once more safe on *terra firma*.

Messrs. Alexander M'Tavish, Bethune, and four men, still remained on the western side, and in

consequence of the narrow escape which our two first parties had, they determined not to attempt crossing in such a dangerous spot. Having loaded our horses, we proceeded about five miles below the traverse, when we encamped. M'Tavish's party passed the night on the opposite bank in a miserable situation, being totally deprived of either food or covering, and without means even to make a fire.

Started early on the morning of the 3rd, and after travelling about four miles we arrived opposite the spot where our friends had passed the night. They had no means of joining us but by a raft. The river was smooth ; which circumstance, strengthened by the irrepressible gnawings of hunger, conquered their dislike to that mode of crossing. Having neither axe nor line, they collected as many pieces of drift-wood as they could find on the beach, which they bound together by withes, after which they embarked. The raft however had scarcely left the shore when it began to give way, and Messrs. Bethune, M'Tavish, and two men immediately jumped off, and regained the land at the expense of a good ducking. The

other two men however succeeded in crossing the river on separate pieces, and joined us in safety.

François, a Creole, now volunteered to swim over on horseback, and bring with him an axe and some line for the purpose of making a raft lower down. This proposition was gladly accepted, and having taken the strongest of our five horses, he plunged in and gained the opposite bank.

As Mr. Bethune did not like to venture a second time at this place, we appointed to meet him at the junction of the Rocky Mountain with the Athabasca river, where we hoped he would be able to join us. We then continued our progress, and at nine A. M. arrived at the mouth of the river, where it joins the Athabasca; and, to our great surprise, observed Mr. Bethune's party proceeding at a great distance down the western bank of the river. We hailed them, and fired several shots: but as they paid no attention to our signals, we imagined they were acquainted with a better place to cross the river than that which we had pointed out.

We therefore set all hands to work to construct rafts for our party. The Athabasca river at this place was about four hundred yards wide; the cur-

rent strong, but free from rapids, and with the exception of two rocks in the centre of the river, there was no apparent danger to be apprehended. We remained until one o'clock, making two rafts, with poles and paddles necessary for working them. The horses were first sent across, followed by two men, after which we embarked five on each raft, and pushed off. I took care not to separate from my friend M'Gillivray and the Iroquois. After poling for a few minutes we lost bottom, and were obliged to have recourse to the paddles, with which we worked on tolerably well until we reached the centre of the stream, where we found the current much more rapid than we had anticipated. Owing to this circumstance, and the difficulty of steering the raft, we found ourselves carried along with great velocity towards one of the rocks already mentioned. The danger was imminent; for, had we come broadside against it, we should undoubtedly have gone to pieces and perished. We therefore exerted ourselves to the utmost to prevent the collision, and were so far fortunate as to escape, with merely a slight shock from the corner of the raft touching a projecting

point of the rock. After this we went on smoothly, and reached the eastern side in safety, having drifted about a mile down the river from the place of embarkation.

The horses were quickly loaded, and we proceeded along the banks about nine miles, when, ascending a high hill, which commanded an extensive prospect, we observed a volume of smoke some distance ahead. Supposing it had been made by our lost companions, two active men were sent to ascertain the fact. They shortly returned, and stated they had seen a fire on the opposite bank of the main river, but no appearance of any human being about it. We therefore conjectured the fire had been made by Bethune's party, and that they had continued on.

We accordingly increased our pace, in the hope of overtaking them, and arrived late in the evening at an uninhabited house, heartily tired. This place is called the "Old Fort," and was built several years before as a hunting lodge for trappers; but owing to the scarcity of provisions was subsequently abandoned: its lat. is $52^{\circ} 53' 10''$ N.

From the junction of the two rivers to the old

fort, the country on each side presents a pleasing variety of prairies, open woods, and gently rising eminences; and one spot in particular, called *La prairie de la Vache*, (in consequence of buffalo having been formerly killed in it,) forms a landscape, that for rural beauty cannot be excelled in any country. Some slight showers during the day.

June 4th. Early this morning we despatched two parties in quest of Messrs. M'Tavish, Bethune, and the men who remained with them, and at nine o'clock they returned, bringing them all back in safety, but in a state of great exhaustion from want of food, and exposure without covering to the night air. They had advanced within four miles of our encampment, when they perceived our men; and the river being smooth, they constructed a raft and crossed over in safety. Remained here a couple of hours to refresh the party, after which the horses were loaded, and we proceeded for about three miles through a handsomely diversified country, when our progress was arrested by a bold mountain torrent, which fell into the Athabasca. It was too deep to ford, and we were again obliged to have

recourse to our old expedient of rafts in order to cross it.

The navigation of the main river from this place to Rocky Mountain House being free from obstructions, Mr. M'Dougall determined to proceed thither by water; and taking four of the men with him, they embarked on one of the rafts, and we quickly lost sight of them. We continued on through a handsome country with a tolerable pathway until sun-set, when we encamped on the border of a small rivulet which runs into the Athabasca.

We loaded our horses at three in the morning of the 5th, and for a couple of hours were quite shrouded in oceans of mist; but as it began to dissipate, we had an extensive view of the surrounding scenery.

The genial influence of a June sun relieved the wintry perspective of snow-clad mountains, and as it rose above their lofty summits, imparted a golden tinge to the green savannahs, the open woods, and the innumerable rivulets which contributed their waters to swell the Athabasca. It

was indeed a landscape of contrarities, scarcely to be met with but in the Alpine regions of the Rocky Mountains.

At eight A. M. we arrived at a hunting-lodge belonging to the Company. No person was in it; but we found what was much more acceptable, the body of a buffalo, which had been recently killed, and left for us by the hunters. It was none of the fattest; but to such half-famished devils it was an unexpected luxury. Having eaten, or rather devoured our breakfast, and reserved sufficient for supper, we resumed progress with renovated spirits. At eleven we came to a considerable stream, which it was necessary to cross. It had recently however spread over a flat bottom, and, forming a shallow lake of some acres in extent, completely covered the pathway; in consequence of which our guide experienced much difficulty in conducting us through it.

About a mile beyond this river we arrived at the foot of a stupendous rock, called *Le Rocher de Miette*, over which we had to pass. We commenced our task a little after eleven; and at half-past two arrived at its base on the northern side,

where we remained an hour to refresh the horses. The road over this rock is tolerably good, but extremely steep. The horses surmounted it with great labour; and the knees of the majority of our party were put to a severe test in the ascent. From the summit we had an extensive view of the country, the general features of which do not differ materially from the scenery through which we passed the preceding day. A little above the southern point of the rock we observed that the Athabasca river opened into a lake of about three miles in length, and two in breadth, and a few miles below its northern extremity the river formed another lake of nearly similar dimensions. Independently of these, the continual accession of waters which the Athabasca received from its tributary streams caused it to burst its natural boundaries, and in many places we had to wade from one to two miles through the flood. Encamped at sun-set, at the head of the lower lake; and, maugre our fatigue from travelling "o'er mountain and through flood," succeeded in despatching with wonderful celerity the remains of our buffalo.

At eight A. M. on the morning of the 6th we came

opposite Rocky Mountain House, which is built on the western shore of the second lake. A canoe was immediately despatched for us, and we crossed over. This building was a miserable concern of rough logs, with only three apartments, but scrupulously clean inside. An old clerk, Mr. Jasper Hawes, was in charge, and had under his command two Canadians, two Iroquois, and three hunters. Its lat. is $53^{\circ} 18' 40''$ N. Mr. M'Dougall had arrived the day before us, after leaving his raft at the upper end of the lower lake, from whence he and his party walked to the house.

We expected to have found a supply of provisions here, that would enable us to reach English river; but, to our extreme disappointment, none was to be had. Mr. Hawes informed us that the hunters were not able to kill more animals than were barely sufficient to support his party; but added, that there was every probability of our obtaining a supply from Lesser Slave Lake, where Mr. Alexander Stewart had wintered, and whose party we expected to join in our route to Fort William. Remained here all day getting our canoes into order, preparatory to our bidding fare-

well to the Rocky Mountains. The distance from the Columbia to this place, which we travelled on foot, is by computation about eighty-five or ninety miles. This took nearly ten days to accomplish. Some of our men were greatly exhausted; but when we take into consideration the fatigues which they endured in ascending the Columbia, the burdens they carried in crossing the mountain, joined to the difficulties of the road, it must be acknowledged that few could surpass them in strength, patience, or perseverance. The house is situated near a stream called *La Rivière à la Boucane*, in consequence of some of the hunters who first visited this place having alleged that they saw a volcano near its source, which emitted great quantities of smoke. On making inquiry from our people, I could not learn that they had ever seen an actual eruption; but they assert that in the autumnal months the ground is quite hot, and that smoke issues from it in various places; during which period, they add, a strong sulphuric smell pervades the atmosphere.

We saw nothing from which we could judge whether the mountains contained any metallic

ores or metals, and I could not find on the banks of the various streams any of those fine agates which I found on the Columbia. We, however, had no time, nor were we qualified to enter into scientific researches; and it will not be until civilisation has approached a few hundred leagues nearer these great mountains that their various productions will be known. At present, however, I am of opinion that they contain nothing sufficient to repay a party in visiting them merely for scientific purposes. The animals found in the various passes of the mountains are the buffaloes, ibex, big-horns, or mountain sheep, bears, and sometimes a few wolves. These are too well known to require any description here. Some of the Upper Crees, a tribe who inhabit the country in the vicinity of the Athabasca river, have a curious tradition with respect to animals which they state formerly frequented the mountains. They allege that these animals were of frightful magnitude, being from two to three hundred feet in length, and high in proportion; that they formerly lived in the plains, a great distance to the eastward; from which they were gradually driven by the In-

dians to the Rocky Mountains; that they destroyed all smaller animals; and if their agility was equal to their size, would have also destroyed all the natives, &c. One man has asserted that his grandfather told him he saw one of those animals in a mountain pass, where he was hunting, and that on hearing its roar, which he compared to loud thunder, the sight almost left his eyes, and his heart became as small as an infant's.

Whether such an animal ever existed I shall leave to the curious in natural history to determine; but if the Indian tradition have any foundation in truth, it may have been the mammoth, some of whose remains have been found at various times in the United States.

The height of the Rocky Mountains varies considerably. The table land which we crossed I should take to be about 11,000 feet above the level of the sea. From the immense number of rapids we had to pass in ascending the Columbia, and its precipitous bed above the lakes, I consider that at their base the mountains cannot be much under 8000 feet above the level of the Pacific; and from the valley of Canoe River to the

level part of the heights of land cannot be less than 3000 feet, but the actual altitude of their highest summits must be much greater. They are covered with eternal ice and snow, and will probably be for ever inaccessible to man.

June 7th. We were detained a considerable portion of this day getting the canoes finished, and at half past one P. M. we took leave of the melancholy hermitage of Mr. Jasper Hawes. We had two good bark canoes and six men in each. The lake extended about half a mile below the house, when we entered the river, the current of which is very strong, with here and there a few rapids, at none of which we were obliged to unload.

Encamped at dusk on a small low island. Had several smart showers during the day.

June 8th. It rained the greater part of the night. Embarked at day-break in a thick fog, which continued upwards of two hours. At eight damaged our canoes in a rapid, at the foot of which we stopped to breakfast and repair. At noon passed a small river from the east called M'Leod's Fork. Late in the evening passed two

lodges of Indians, and encamped a short distance below them. They paid us a visit, and proved to be Crees of the Forts des Prairies department. They brought with them a few bags of dried meat and fruit, which they wished to barter for rum; but as we had none of that cheering beverage to give them, we tendered them our bills on the Company, for which they would have obtained value from any proprietor or clerk of the establishment; at the same time explaining to them, that we stood in great need of provisions. Mr. Bethune knew that they were attached to the interests of our rivals the Hudson's-Bay Company, and therefore offered them higher prices than he would have done to those of a friendly tribe; but it was all unavailing. They would hear of nothing—speak of nothing—until rum was produced; and on finding that none could be obtained, those splendid specimens of savage hospitality carried away their extra provisions, although they were informed that we had not enough to subsist on for a couple of days!

From Rocky Mountain House to this place the country on each side of the river is low,

and tolerably well wooded, but a strong and marked difference is observable in the size of the trees on the eastern side of the mountains. Here all is dwarfish and stunted; while on the Columbia the vegetable world is seen in its richest and most magnificent forms — including all the varieties from a luxuriant growth of blackberry or wild-cherry, to the stately pine, and majestic cedar. It is difficult to account for this difference; but if I might hazard an opinion, I would attribute it to the great humidity of the climate on the Columbia. There, westerly and south-westerly winds prevail eight months out of the twelve, and carry with them immense masses of clouds from the North Pacific. A great portion of these break over the high lands on the coast; and such as escape are arrested in their flight eastward by the Rocky Mountains, and burst over their western base. So that at the very source of the Columbia the pine and cedar are as gigantic as at its entrance into the ocean.

CHAPTER X.

Descent of the Athabasca River—Party disappointed in receiving provisions—Elk River and Lake—Join the brigade from Lesser Slave Lake—Arrive at Ile à la Crosse—Dreadful effects of the opposition between the North-West and Hudson's-Bay Companies—Sketch of Mr. Peter Ogden.

MONDAY, June 9th. At eleven A.M. passed a small river from the eastward, called the Pembina, from a profusion of berries of that name which grow on its banks. At two P. M. stopped at a hunting-lodge of free Iroquois. The head of the family had a letter-addressed, "To the gentlemen from the Columbia." It was eagerly broken open, and we found it was written by Mr. Alexander Stewart, and dated from Lesser Slave Lake, from which place he was on the point of setting off with his

winter's trade of furs for Fort William. In it he regretted his inability to assist us with any provisions, alleging as a reason, that he had a bare sufficiency for the support of his own people outwards; but recommending that a portion of our party should be sent to Slave Lake, where they would find fish enough during the summer, and be able to set off the ensuing spring without any fear of starvation.

This intelligence was dreadful, the more so from its being unexpected; for the spring party from the Columbia had hitherto, after crossing the mountains, invariably obtained from the people at Lesser Slave Lake, a fresh stock of dried meat or other food sufficient to support them to English River, or Cumberland House. We of course expected the usual supply, all hopes of which were now banished by Mr. Stewart's letter. A council was immediately held to consider what plan we should adopt in this emergency, when it was suggested that M'Tavish and I should proceed forthwith with six men to Slave Lake, and remain there until the spring for our passage to Canada. To me, another year in the Indian country would be

an age: the idea was horrible; and I at once refused to accede to such an arrangement. M'Tavish was equally unbending, and declared his fixed determination to proceed. It was urged that we had not provisions for three days, and that with such a scanty allowance, and no certainty of procuring a supply, inevitable starvation awaited us. Finding that this gloomy picture made no impression on us, recourse was had to threats, and it was pretty broadly insinuated that force would be adopted to compel obedience. Matters now became desperate; we loaded our guns, trimmed our flints, the hilt of the dirk became more conspicuous, and menace was answered by defiance. The canoe-men looked on in silent amazement, but did not attempt to interfere; indeed had they been so inclined, we felt certain that those belonging to our own canoe would not have deserted us. Our opponents at length thought it prudent to yield to our wishes, and a sort of sulky reconciliation took place, after which we embarked. We had previously ascertained from the Iroquois, that Mr. Stewart's brigade was not more than four days ahead; and as they were heavily laden with furs,

while our canoes were quite light, we determined to strain every nerve to overtake them. The river was broad, with a swift current, and free from rapids; and we therefore continued on all night, a disagreeable head wind occasionally annoying us.

June 10th. The Athabasca is here a noble river, flowing through a rich pasture country thinly wooded: saw several tracks of buffalo; but while we had the current in our favour, we did not think it prudent to stop. The stream carried us down in fine style, until six P. M., when we arrived at the entrance of *La Rivière de la Biche* (Elk River), where we left the Athabasca, which, pursuing the course I have already mentioned, ultimately discharges its waters into the Arctic Ocean. For the last one hundred and twenty miles its navigation was uninterrupted by rapids, with a smooth steady current, and the soil on each bank of the richest description.

We now shaped our course easterly, and ascended *Rivière de la Biche* about three miles, when we encamped. The water was very low, and we were dreadfully tormented with mosquitoes; but our hunters having discovered some

fresh tracks of buffalo, cheered our drooping spirits a little.

June 11th. Rose at day-break, but could scarcely see twenty yards ahead, from a thick fog. Owing to the shallowness of the river, the passengers preferred walking, in order to lighten the canoes. Made half a breakfast of our dried pemmican, of which we had not now enough for dinner. At ten A. M. the river became wider and deeper, which enabled us to embark and resume the paddles. At eleven passed a small stream called Auger's River : and about two P. M. came up to a recent encampment of the Slave Lake brigade, the fires of which were still burning. Here we also found some pieces of buffalo meat, which those gentry did not think fat enough to carry, but which proved very grateful to our poor fellows. At eight passed the river Pinette, and encamped at dusk. The land on each side was very low, and thinly wooded with small pine and poplar. In some parts we observed patches of prairie ground of two or three miles in extent. Saw one buffalo, about three in the evening, but missed him.

June 12th. We had good deep water for pad-

dling, from day-break until six A. M., when the river for about four miles spread over a stony bottom, which obliged us to land, while the men worked up with the lines and poles. It then became narrower and deeper, and continued so for several miles, until eleven A. M., when it entered Lac de la Biche, which we crossed in three hours with calm weather. As we approached the eastern shore, we observed smoke issuing from a small cove, and immediately after the white canvass of a tent met our delighted eyes. A few minutes more brought us to land, when we had the inexpressible pleasure of meeting Mr. Alexander Stewart, and the Slave Lake brigade, consisting of eight canoes, and about forty-five men. This was a fortunate circumstance. We had not eaten a mouthful that day, up to two o'clock, with starvation staring us in the face, no natives on our route, and our chance of killing animals more than doubtful. We now however recompensed ourselves for all these uncertainties and apprehensions, by a plentiful repast of roast buffalo and white-fish.

This lake, from the time we took to traverse it,

I should suppose to be about thirty miles in circumference. It is nearly circular, and abounds in white-fish. The surrounding country is extremely low, without any rising ground in sight, and on the western side the land is quite marshy. The shores are tolerably wooded, principally with pine, birch, and poplar.

During the night a number of the men were employed on the lake catching fish by torch-light, and were rather successful.

June 13th. About three miles to the eastward of our encampment lies a small lake, called by the Canadians *Le Petit Lac de Biche*. The country between the two lakes forms the height of land which divides the waters that fall into the Arctic Ocean from the eastward, from those which fall into Hudson's Bay from the westward. Mr. Stewart's men had commenced this portage yesterday, and it took us the greater part of this day to finish it; which will not appear extraordinary, when it is considered that ten large canoes, and between two and three hundred packs of beaver, each weighing upwards of ninety pounds, had to be carried three miles through a swampy marsh, full

of underwood, during the greater part of which time it rained heavily. Encamped at four p. m. on the shore of the little lake which we had previously crossed, and which was not more than half a mile in breadth.

June 14th. It continued raining the greater part of the night. Commenced another portage this morning, of two hundred and fifty paces in length, which brought us to a small stream called Little Beaver River, into which we threw the canoes. There was not sufficient water to float them when loaded, in consequence of which we had to construct dams at intervals of four or five hundred paces. This was both a tedious and laborious work; and we encamped at six p. m., having advanced only five miles since morning. Some of the men were sent ahead, to make more dams. The passengers walked during the day, and our hunters killed one fat moose deer. The country is thinly wooded and marshy, and full of wild onions and a species of plant which served as an excellent substitute for cabbage.

June 15th. It rained hard all night, and the greater part of this forenoon, owing to which we

did not start until twelve o'clock, and, being obliged to continue the damming system all day, our progress was of course extremely tedious. Passed several handsome prairies, and observed in many places along the banks of the little river marks of beaver cuttings. Birch, pine, and poplar, form the principal timber here. Made a small portage, and encamped at seven P. M. Our hunter killed another prime moose.

June 16th. Set off at three A. M., still in the dams. At seven made a short portage, at the end of which we stopped to breakfast and repair the canoes, which had been greatly shattered by their ditch navigation. About one P. M. we had a sufficient body of water to admit of our embarking, and we proceeded with a tolerably smooth current until half past four, when we encamped, having overtaken our hunters, who had killed a fat bull-buffalo, and two beavers, on which we made an excellent dinner. The country was not so well wooded as yesterday. We had cloudy, and occasionally rainy weather, which for the season was also rather chilly.

June 17th. Embarked at half past three A. M.

Made several portages on account of rapids and shoals. Our progress was therefore slow. Killed a buck-moose in good condition. On shore the greater part of the day. It consisted principally of rich meadow land, with clusters of birch and poplar scattered here and there along the banks of the river. Encamped at six P. M.

June 18th. Set off at four, and had a pretty smooth steady current all day. The country now assumes a more picturesque appearance, rather thickly wooded, and the banks of the river more bold and hilly. The rapidity of our progress brought us considerably in advance of the hunters, and at three P. M. we put ashore to wait for them. The place at which we stopped was called *La Jolie Butte*, by way of pre-eminence, from the varied and handsome landscape by which it was surrounded. The hunters joined us at six, after which we continued on, and encamped at eight P. M. in sight of Moose Portage. Only three beavers were killed this day.

June 19th. Sent the hunters off ahead at day-break, and at half past five commenced Moose Portage, which we passed in less than two hours.

Here we found, fixed on poles in a conspicuous part of the portage, some letters from the gentlemen stationed at Forts des Prairies, containing satisfactory news. From their date we conjectured that the messengers who brought them must have been very recently at the portage. At nine A. M. joined the hunters, who had just returned from a long chase to the northward, in the course of which they only killed one bull and one moose: and as we stood in great need of a supply, we were obliged to stop here the remainder of the day, to give the meat-men time to bring in the bodies of those animals. The hunters, however, started off ahead.

June 20th. The meat-men did not return until nine this morning, when we embarked; but at eleven the hunters' signal drew us to shore, and the meat-men were despatched. They remained away six hours, and returned at five P. M. loaded with the carcasses of an immensely sized bull, and a huge grizzly bear. Encamped at eight, at the Portage du Lac Froid, a small lake, the water of which some of our people imagine is colder than that of Beaver River, and, in order to

account for this extra frigidity, it is supposed that it is fed from the bottom by springs of a peculiar nature. I tasted it; but whether it was owing to the heat of the weather, or to a vitiated palate, I must candidly confess, that I could not discover any perceptible difference in its temperature.

The country through which we passed for the last few days is highly diversified with hill and dale, meadow-ground and timber, and has many charming spots for building.

June 21st. Set off at four A. M., and drove down the current in fine style until two P. M., when we came up with our hunters. They had just returned after a long and fatiguing pursuit of a herd of buffaloes, three of which they killed, besides five they wounded, but which made their escape. Encamped here, and sent off a party for the meat. A ridge of pretty high hills thickly wooded runs parallel with the course of the river from Lac Froid to this place. M'Tavish and I took a stroll inland in the track of the hunters, and had not proceeded more than a mile when we observed several buffaloes grazing. I instantly fired, and hit one under the left shoulder. The

remainder fled ; but the wounded animal, bellowing in a frightful manner, with rage and fury flashing from his rolling eyes, charged on us. We retreated behind the cover of a tree, from whence M'Tavish took a steady aim, and lodged a ball in his head directly over the right eye. He instantly fell, and we cautiously approached him, but took care to plant a couple more bullets about his head before we came within arm's length.

June 22d. The meat-men did not return until half past ten this morning, when we set off, but were obliged to stop from twelve to three for another buffalo which our hunters had killed. Encamped at eight P. M. in a handsome prairie on the north side. Observed recent marks of buffalo and moose, and numerous beaver cuttings.

June 23d. Embarked at half past three A. M. Stopped about an hour for a moose which was killed about half a mile inland. The river for the two last days had no rapid of any consequence, and the weather was very warm. A little after eight P. M. observed a small leather hut on the north side, in which we found three free

trappers, who had been formerly *engagés* of the North-West Company; but who, after the expiration of their engagement, preferred the wild and wandering life of a trapper, to remaining in the Company's service, or returning to Canada. We encamped a little below their hut, and they visited us after supper. Their news was by no means of an agreeable nature. They informed us, that they had learned from some natives that a party of the Cree Indians from Forts des Prairies, urged by large promises of reward from the Hudson's-Bay Company, had gone on a war expedition to destroy our establishment at *Ile à la Crosse* and all its inmates; adding, that whether successful or not, it was more than probable we might meet this party *en route*.

As this intelligence was quite unexpected, and as we were badly prepared to encounter a war party of savages, Mr. Stewart, who had now the command, ordered the hunters not to advance more than a mile ahead, and, in case they observed any appearance of natives, to return immediately to the main brigade. In the mean time our fire-arms were put in order, and the men, the greater

part of whom had no weapons save their knives, were ordered to furnish themselves with clubs. We then retired to rest, leaving five sentinels and an officer on guard, to be relieved every two hours.

June 24th. Set off at half-past three, A.M. At half-past two, P.M., passed Lac Vert, a small lake so called from the greenish tinge of its water. Encamped at half-past seven at the entrance of a small river called La Poule d'Eau. The country these two days is thinly wooded, and very flat.— In many places the river had overflowed its banks. Saw no animals.

June 25th. Embarked at half-past three.— Stopped from eleven to two, to repair the canoes, and dry some of the beaver which had been slightly damaged from leaks. The country through which we passed this day was quite flat and marshy, occasioned by the inundations in times of high water. Encamped at dusk, at the entrance of a small river called La Plonge.

June 26th. Beaver River at this place branches into several channels. We took the principal one, and at eleven A.M. arrived at its termination

where it enters the lake of *Ile d la Crosse*, nearly opposite the fort. Stopped here for half-an-hour *pour se faire la barbe*, and make other little arrangements connected with the toilet. These being completed, we embarked, but having the fear of the Crees before our eyes, our progress was slow and cautious across the lake, until our avant-couriers announced to us that the flag of the North-West floated from the bastions, and that all was safe. The *Chanson d l'aviron* was instantly struck up, and at one P. M. we reached the wharf, where we were met by Messrs. M'Murray and Ogden, who were in charge of the fort. Those gentlemen had also heard the rumoured intention of the Crees to attack the establishment, but they were of opinion that the attempt would not be made. They had only eight men under their command; but the place was surrounded by strong palisades, and flanked by two bastions, which, although not very beautiful specimens of fortification, would have puzzled a battalion of Indians to take. The Hudson's-Bay Company had a fort on a point of land running into the lake, which was not more than a quarter of a mile

distant from our establishment. It had been taken the preceding winter by the North-West Company, and at the period of our arrival there were about twenty (men) prisoners in it, and upwards of one hundred and twenty women and children, besides dogs innumerable. They were miserably supplied with provisions, and all seemed dejected and emaciated. Their principal reliance for food was on the lake ; and when the fish failed, their chief support was *tripe de rocher*. I conversed with some of the men. They were from the Orkneys, and wished they were safe home again. They spoke in no flattering terms of the treatment they received from their captors ; but admitted that such of the North-Westerners as had been made prisoners by their party fared no better.

It will undoubtedly sound odd in the ears of British readers, to hear of forts attacked and prisoners taken by commercial companies, natives of the same country, and subjects of the same king. To account for this it will be necessary to take a short retrospect, in order to explain the causes that led to a state of things which was

ultimately productive of so many disastrous and melancholy consequences.

The opposition between the Hudson's-Bay and the North-West Companies was for many years carried on without any violent breach of the peace on either side. As I have observed in the introduction, the indolent habits of the persons belonging to the former, unstimulated by any hope of extra reward or prospective promotion, gave to the North-West Company powerful advantages, of which they did not fail to avail themselves; and while their enterprising agents explored the most remote parts of the continent for the extension of their trade, their chartered opponents, with a Dutch-like kind of apathy, quietly confined themselves to their ancient territory.

Both parties were thus situated, when the late Earl of Selkirk conceived the idea of establishing a Colony of Scotch and Irish on the Red River, which falls into Lake Winepic. The soil was fertile, the climate temperate, and, were it not for its great distance from civilization, was admirably calculated for a new settlement. It was, however, the great depôt of the North-West Company for

making pemmican, the principal article of food used by their canoe-men in voyaging. If the colony succeeded, it would gradually cut off the buffalo, from which the pemmican is made, and ultimately oblige the Company to import from Canada, at an enormous expense, a great portion of the provisions necessary for their travelling parties. It may therefore be supposed, that the settlers were not regarded with the most friendly feelings; and every obstacle short of actual violence was thrown in the way of their location. Their first year was one of incredible hardships, arising from their ignorance of the country and its productions, and the total failure of their provisions; which, joined to the various modes of annoyance practised by the North-West Company, induced the greater part to avail themselves of an offer made by members of that concern to transport them gratuitously to Canada in their canoes.

The want of success in his first attempt at colonization being, in a great degree, caused by the opposition of the North-West Company, Lord Selkirk determined to adopt retaliatory measures; and for this purpose purchased a number of shares

in the Hudson's-Bay Company, of which he became an active director. His Lordship was well aware that several clerks, who had been many years in the service of the rival Company, were discontented at not having been sooner promoted to the proprietary, and that the claims of the old and faithful were too often passed over, while young favourites of comparatively little experience were placed above them. It was therefore an important object with him to induce as many as possible of those so dissatisfied to join his party by the offer of large salaries, which several, at the expiration of their various engagements with the North-West Company, accepted.

The most active of these gentlemen was Mr. Colin Robertson, an enterprising trader who had often ventured his life, both among Indians and white-men to advance the interests of his establishment. Having a perfect knowledge of the business of the interior, Lord Selkirk entrusted him with its chief management; and as he knew from experience the great superiority of the Canadian voyageurs over the Orkney men, in the

management of canoes, &c., he engaged a number of them at Montreal at a much higher rate of wages than had been previously paid by the North-West Company.

The opposition between the rival parties now assumed a new and more marked character, and the invigorating spirit which had been infused into the hitherto cautious councils of the Hudson's Bay, by the daring policy of Mr. Robertson, soon became manifest. He knew the strong holds and the weak points of his opponents, and being of opinion that much depended on the first impression made on the Indians, he at once determined to push for Athabasca, the great northern department of the North-West, and the most productive in beaver. No rival trader had ever before ventured to encroach on Athabasca, and this unexpected invasion was deemed the *ne plus ultra* of audacity, the seizure of the bull by the horns.

Mr. Robertson was successful in his first expedition. The high prices he offered for their furs seduced the natives from their allegiance to their old masters, and hundreds came crowding to his

standard. In other parts of the interior the struggle was more obstinate, and the North-Westerns, to secure the wavering loyalty of the Indians, were compelled to keep pace with the advanced prices of their opponents.

A reinforcement of settlers having in the mean time arrived at Hudson's Bay, they were despatched to the Red River, where they built a strong fort, and began to re-establish the colony. Several of the natives joined them, and the influence of the North-West became sensibly diminished in that quarter.

Thus far Lord Selkirk's plan of operations for the year 1814-15 succeeded beyond his expectations; and great preparations were made by him for opening the ensuing campaign on a much more extended scale. The exertions of the North-Westerns were equally vigorous. Double the usual quantity of trading goods was sent to the interior, the men's wages were raised, and several clerks were elected proprietors. The orders to both parties were, to secure as much provisions and furs as they could collect, *coûte qui coûte*.

Mr. Clarke, lately of the Pacific Fur Company,

on his arrival in Canada from the Columbia, was engaged by Lord Selkirk, and proceeded with a strong force to Athabasca, in which department he had spent many years while in the service of the North-West, during which period he was a great favourite with the Chepweyans.

It is not my intention however to give a detail of the various quarrels, the prisoners made, the forts surprised, or the lists of killed and wounded, on each side; but from the following extracts of letters, which I received before quitting the Columbia, it will be seen that the Hudson's-Bay people were the greatest sufferers.

“ Fort William, 28th July, 1816.

“ You already know the strong opposition that came into the country, the greatest part of which went to Athabasca, and Slave Lake. You must also have heard of their success at the former place, having been obliged from starvation to give themselves up to the North-West; although your old friend* swore he would rather die than come

* Mr. Clarke.

under any obligations to our people. He lost seventeen men by famine. At Slave Lake they were more successful; but at the different establishments they had in other parts of the country, they lost thirteen more by starvation. Last June they received a mortal blow from the Cossacks* of Red River; of which affair, as I was on the spot a few days after, I shall give you a detail. You of course know that two of our forts were taken, and all the property; and that Captain Cameron† was made prisoner. The forts were subsequently burned.

“Mr. A. M'Donell, who was stationed at *Qu'appelle* river, held his fort in defiance of them. He was threatened with destruction if he made any attempt to pass downward. His opponent however started with his men, and returns of furs and provisions; of the latter he had about three hundred *taureaux* (pemmigans) well guarded, as

* A *nom de guerre* given by the writer to the sons of White men by Indian wives. They are also called *Bois Brûlés*,—but why, it is difficult to determine.

† This gentleman was a proprietor of the North-West Company.

they thought, but those *blackguard Brulés* (I know not for what cause) fell in with them, took them all prisoners, and carried the property to Mr. M'Donell. No blood was shed on this occasion. Some time after Mr. M'Donell being anxious for the arrival of the gentlemen from the northward, sent a party of five Canadians with two carts loaded with provisions for us, by land; and the above *blackguards* took upon themselves to accompany them, to the number of fifty. On passing by the colony, at the distance of two miles, they were stopped by the governor and twenty-six men well armed. The *Brulés* were at that time but thirteen, including the Canadians. A few words arose between the governor and one of our men. The former ordered his men to fire, when two only, with much reluctance, obeyed. The fire was immediately returned by the *Brulés*, when seven instantly fell. A retreat was begun by the Hudson's-Bay people; but out of twenty-six, only four escaped. Officers killed, Governor Semple, Messrs M'Lean, Rogers, Holt, Wilkinson, and Doctor White. A Mr. Burke, who commanded their artillery, was wounded, and is now a pri-

soner here with three others. The *Brulés* had only one man killed, and one wounded. They took the fort, with a great quantity of arms and ammunition, and have sworn vengeance against every description of Hudson's-Bay men. Even the Indians attached to the interests of the latter, were obliged to come under the banners of the *Brulés*. They were commanded by six officers, some of whom you know.* This happened on the 19th of June, and we arrived on the 23rd.

“ Lord Selkirk is coming up in person with a strong force, expecting, no doubt, to carry every thing before him. His body-guard was taken from him before leaving Montreal, as the regiment was disbanded. He has however hired some of them on his own account. We expect him daily. His friend Miles M'Donell with two canoes went in almost to *Bas de la Rivière*; but on learning from the Indians the above intelligence, he

* The leader of this party, Mr. Alexander Fraser, is the same individual who lost his life at the commencement of the year 1829 in Paris, in a quarrel with a Mr. Warren, who was subsequently tried for the offence, and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. Mr. Fraser was wholly blameless in the unfortunate affair, which ended in his death.

thought proper to change his course, and immediately returned to wait his Lordship's orders. Five of their canoes are stuck fast near this place, one further on, and three have returned to the *Sault* in a state of mutiny. By this you may see what his Lordship's prospects may be."

"Fort William, 30th July, 1826.

"My dear Cox,

"Times have much altered since I have been on this side the mountains. The habits of indolence which I acquired on the banks of the Columbia, render every thing on this busy bustling scene rather disagreeable; and, to add to my vexation, notwithstanding my long services, and my exertions to avoid it, I have been appointed to winter in a most villanous starving post, with a strong force of the Hudson's Bay to oppose me.

"Mr. Clarke was remarkably unfortunate in his Athabasca expedition. He lost numbers of his people from starvation; and in order to save the remainder he was forced to capitulate, surrender his fort, and the whole of his property.

"At Red River, during the winter, the Hud-

son's Bay drove all before them. They took several of our forts, and made a prisoner of one of our proprietors (Mr. Cameron,) whom they sent to the Bay, to be from thence transmitted for trial to England. They met however a severe blow in the spring. They attacked a party of half-breeds, and were defeated with the loss of twenty-five men, including three officers. Their forts and provisions fell into our hands, their men were made prisoners, and the whole of their Colonists and traders were driven out of the Red River.

“ We are daily expecting Lord Selkirk with a force of two hundred men from Montreal, but he will be undoubtedly forced to retreat from want of provisions. He is yet ignorant of the disasters that have befallen his favourite Colony. What the result will be, time must determine.”

The writers of those letters were two of the most moderate men in our Company; but from the apathy they evince in speaking of the ruthless massacre of the unfortunate settlers, the *esprit de corps* which animated the fighting members may be conjectured. In fact the infernal spirit of ri-

valry had attained such a height, that the mildest and the bravest of both parties became in turn the most reckless desperadoes. Force was the only tribunal to which they appealed, and arms their only arguments.

The peace with the United States had thrown idle in Canada a number of soldiers whose regiments had been disbanded. Among those was de Meuron's regiment, upwards of two hundred of which were engaged by Lord Selkirk, as a *corps d'observation*, to awe the North-Westerns. On hearing however of the fate of the Colonists at Red River, he did not think it prudent to venture beyond Fort William, and immediately returned to the seat of government in Canada. A number of the most influential members of the rival Companies had been the year before appointed magistrates for the Indian territory; and owing to the representations of his Lordship, as to the manner in which his Majesty's subjects were murdering each other with impunity, the Governor-General issued a proclamation, commanding the immediate arrest of all persons concerned in the recent outrages and threatening with the severest punishment

all future breaches of the peace.* His Excellency also appointed Messrs. Coltman and Fletcher, two gentlemen of the highest respectability, and unconnected with either Company, as commissioners to proceed forthwith to the Indian country, for the purpose of investigating into the origin of the outrages, and to order the arrest of all persons implicated, with a view to their being transmitted to Canada for trial. It was however rather late in the season to proceed to the interior, and their departure was therefore delayed until the spring of 1817.

In the mean time, the war was carried on with unabated vigour during the winter of 1816-17. One partner, one clerk, and a few men belonging to the North-Westerns, were captured by the Hudson's-Bay people; but the latter were generally defeated. Several of their officers and numbers of their men were made prisoners; and some of their forts were obliged to capitulate on unconditional terms.

* This document was forwarded by express to the interior, and treated with sovereign contempt by the majority of those to whom it was addressed.

The spirit of ruinous competition had at this period gained such a height, that the prices given to the Indians for their furs, after deducting the expenses of carriage and other contingent charges, far exceeded their value to the Company. Their profits became sensibly diminished, and the persons who derived the greatest benefits from the opposition were the clerks and other *employés*.

Such was the situation of affairs when we arrived at Ile à la Crosse. As I have already mentioned, the Hudson's-Bay establishment at this place had been captured the preceding winter by the North-West, and the officer in charge sent forward to join some more of his companions in captivity.

We remained a couple of days at the fort to refresh the men, and were hospitably entertained by our hosts, on excellent white fish, and tea without sugar. One of those gentlemen, Mr. Peter Ogden, was nearly related to a high judicial functionary, and in early life was destined for the same profession. The study of provincial jurisprudence, and the seignorial subdivisions of Cana-

dian property, had no charms for the mercurial temperament of Mr. Ogden ; and, contrary to the wishes of his friends, he preferred the wild and untrammelled life of an Indian trader, to the "law's delay," and the wholesome restraints which are provided for the correction of over-exuberant spirits in civilised society. His accounts of his various rencontres with Orkney men and Indians would have filled a moderate-sized octavo, and if reduced to writing would undoubtedly stagger the credulity of any person unacquainted with the Indian country ; and although some of his statements were slightly tinged with the prevalent failing of *La Guienne*, there was *vraisemblance* enough throughout to command our belief in their general accuracy. In a country, however, in which there is no legal tribunal to appeal to, and into which the "King's writ does not run," many acts must be committed that would not stand a strict investigation in *Banco Regis*. "My legal primer," said Ogden, "says that necessity has no law ;" and in this place, where the custom of the country, or as lawyers say, the *Lex non*

scripta is our only guide, we must, in our acts of summary legislation, sometimes perform the parts of judge, jury, sheriff, hangman, gallows and all!"

CHAPTER XI.

English river—Pass numerous lakes and rapids—Arrive at Cumberland House—Saskachawaine river—Lake Winepic—Aurora Borealis—River Winepic—Meet various parties—Rainy Lake and Fort—Death of an Indian.

SUNDAY, June 29th. At half-past eleven A. M. this day we bid adieu to the humorous, honest, eccentric, law-defying Peter Ogden, the terror of Indians, and the delight of all gay fellows.

It blew pretty fresh during the day, which obliged us to keep our square-sail closely reefed. We generally kept from two to six miles from shore, and occasionally shipped a good deal of water. Encamped at eight P. M. at the extremity of the lake. It is computed to be eighteen leagues in length, and from three to five in breadth, and is indented by a number of deep bays, the shores

of which were at times scarcely visible with the naked eye. A few islands are scattered over it, on which we observed immense numbers of pelicans.

June 30th. Embarked at three A. M. At five, passed the Portage Sonnant, which was followed by several bad rapids, through which we ran without unloading. At six, passed Caribœuf river, celebrated for its excellent fish, and at eight passed the Portage de la Puisse, where we stopped to breakfast and repair the canoes. At half-past two, passed the Portage des Anglais; and at six crossed Knee Lake, a pretty large body of water. Encamped at eight, at La Rivière Croche: charming weather all day.

July 1st, 1817. Embarked at three A. M. and at four overtook the loaded canoes, which we passed. Crossed Lac du Sable with a stiff breeze, and shot down Les Rapides des Serpens, without unloading. This brought us into Lac des Serpens, which we crossed with a fair wind at half past ten, and immediately after entered Lac des Souris; at the end of which we breakfasted. Continued on at noon with a fine breeze across

Lac des Epingles, and at half-past two passed the portage at its termination. At three passed the Portage des Bouleaux, at which we only took out half the loading; and at four passed another portage, called Le Canot Cassé. Shortly after crossed Le Lac d'Huile d'Ours with a fair wind, and encamped at six, a little below Le Rapide qui ne parle point. Four lodges of the Chepewyan Indians were near our encampment, from whom we purchased a small quantity of meat. We also caught nine excellent pike. It rained occasionally during the evening. Saw three moose and five bears, but could not get a shot at them.

July 2nd. On examining our nets this morning we found only six pike, a miserable supply for so many people. Set off at three A.M. with a fair wind, and had tolerably good navigation until eight, when we arrived at the Portage des Halliers, at the southern end of which we breakfasted. At one passed the Portage de Traite; at two, that of the Petit Rocher, and at three, a demi-portage called Les Ecors, where the lading only was carried. Encamped at five, at La Rivière des Côtes, where we expected to make a good haul

with our nets. We caught ten pike during the day at the different portages. Saw two large bears, but could not hit them. Weather very warm.

July 3rd. Our nets this morning produced thirty white-fish, pike, pickerel, and carp. Embarked at three A.M. and crossed Le Lac du Diable with a fair breeze. At six finished the Portage du Diable on the left side. The road is long, crooked, and narrow; which accounts, I should suppose, for the name given by the Canadians to the portage. A small lake next followed, which brought us to a chain of short ugly rapids called Les Petits Diabes, down which we shot without unloading, but damaged the canoes considerably. At the end of the last "Little Devil," we were obliged to unload the trading packages, &c. At this place the water forces its way through three small straits into a lake about five miles long, which is terminated by Le Rapide de l'Outre, at the end of which we breakfasted. At ten renewed our progress, and entered Le Lac de l'Outre, which brought us to a portage called Le Petit Rocher de la Montagne, which we finished

at half past twelve. At two made the Portage de la Montagne. The distance between the two portages does not exceed half a mile, and they derive their name from high rocky eminences in the vicinity. Encamped at five, at the south end of Le Lac de la Queue Dépouillée ; where we set our nets. Passed some fine rising grounds during the day, well stocked with spruce, poplar, birch, cypress, and willow. Near the water's edge, we observed quantities of wild gooseberry, currant, strawberry, blueberry, &c.

July 4th. Caught only twenty carp, pike, and white-fish. Started at three. At five arrived at the entrance of Rivière au Rapide, where there are a couple of small houses for the rendezvous of the people belonging to Lac la Ronge, a trading establishment situated about six leagues from this place. As this was esteemed a capital fishing spot, we sent on the loaded canoes, and remained ourselves here the remainder of the day, to recruit our stock of provisions. Weather very sultry all day.

July 5th. Caught only thirty fish, seventeen of which were speared. Embarked at three, and in

half an hour afterwards made the portage of La Rivière au Rapide, which is very short. This brought us into a handsome lake, and at six made the Portage de l'Ile, over a small island, by which a circuitous passage by the river is considerably shortened. After re-embarking we passed through another lake interspersed with islands, which brought us to a narrow rapid channel, through which we passed until we arrived at Portage de Barril at eight o'clock, where we overtook the loaded canoes. They had only caught fish enough for breakfast. After quitting this place we entered another lake a few miles in extent, in the centre of which was a very bad rapid. At nine arrived at another portage called Le grand Rapide du Fort de Traite. It is the longest carrying place on English River. Here we breakfasted and repaired the canoes. Caught also eight good pike. Proceeded on at eleven, and crossed Le Lac du Fort de Traite in three hours and a half, with rather a head wind the greater part of the way.

At three passed the Portage du Fort de Traite, which is rather long. Here took leave of the English River, which, taking the name of Churchill,

turns down to Hudson's Bay. During the six days that we were sailing down this river, we crossed sixteen lakes, and passed upwards of thirty rapids, at sixteen of which we were obliged to make portages.

A little after three P. M. entered a small river with an imperceptible current, in which we had not proceeded more than half a mile, when it widened considerably, and presented to our view an extensive prospect of fine flat country, bounded at a great distance by well-wooded hills. A little further on, the channel again became quite contracted, and more difficult to navigate, owing to several small islands interrupting the course of the current. At one *détroit*, we were obliged to unload and carry the goods some distance. This brought us to a lake which we crossed at half past four, and on the shores of which we encamped, for the purpose of trying to procure a supper of fish. Killed two hares, a pair of ducks, and a brace of partridges during the day, which we boiled with *tripe du rocher*, a species of nutritive moss growing on the rocks and which made excellent soup.

July 6th. Embarked at three. Our nets only

produced four fish this morning. Entered Lac du Bois at half past three, and crossed it in five hours. It is a fine body of water, surrounded by a champaign country, tolerably well wooded. At the end of the lake made three small portages, close to each other, and about two miles lower down made half a portage called Le Décharge au Lac du Bois, all which we completed at half past ten A. M. Mr. Stewart's canoe and mine remained here the rest of the day to fish; one only of the loaded canoes joined us. Dined and supped chiefly on *tripe de rocher*.

July 7th. We caught during the night, with the net, lines, and spears, fifty well-assorted fish, which gave a tolerable meal to our half-starved hard-working men. Set off at the usual hour. At seven crossed Pelican Lake, at which we stopped to breakfast. Here also we caught a few carp.

Proceeded on at nine, and shortly after arrived at the head of Lac Miron, where we remained till noon wind-bound. The weather having moderated a little, we embarked about a quarter past twelve, but had not reached more than the centre of the lake when we were overtaken by a storm of thun-

der, and heavy rain, accompanied by dreadful squalls from every quarter of the compass. To return was impossible, and we continued occasionally shipping large quantities of water, and momentarily expecting to be upset by the violence of the storm. We crossed, however, in safety; and at four, encamped at the Portage d'Épinettes, for the purpose of drying ourselves, and spreading the nets. The weather continued rainy and squally during the night.

July 8th. This morning only produced five pike for the two canoes. Started at half-past three. At four, made the short Portage de l'Île; and at half past seven passed the Portage des Bouleaux dans la Rivière Creuse. It was long and slippery owing to the recent rains. Shortly below it, ran down a dangerous rapid, called la Carpe, without unloading, and were near perishing from the intricacy of the channel. At nine, made the Portage de la Carpe, at the end of which we breakfasted, repaired the canoes, and caught twenty white-fish with a kind of hook formed by one of the men out of the handle of the cooking-kettle. Proceeded on at noon, through a clear channel, until

three P. M. when we arrived at the *Rapide des Ecors*, which we shot down without unloading. At five, made the *Portage de la Pente*, after which a steady uninterrupted current brought us, at half past six, to *Lac Castor*. Here Mr. Stewart's canoe took the lead, and we continued on in a heavy gale and thunder-storm until night overtook us in the centre of the lake. We were for some time in a very critical situation, owing to the darkness, which was only relieved by an occasional flash of lightning. We at length approached shore, and observed a long, high, and rocky point, which it would be madness to attempt to double. Orders were therefore given to land at the most practicable part; and, after beating about for some time in search of a beach, we succeeded about eleven o'clock in running the canoes into a small cove at the southern end of the point. It rained on us the whole night, and we had not a mouthful of provisions.

July 9th. The gale continued without intermission accompanied by heavy rain all the forenoon; and owing to our tent being in Mr. Stewart's canoe, we were deprived of any shelter. About

five P.M. the weather moderated, and enabled us to push off. We doubled the point in safety, after which we hoisted sail, and in half an hour afterwards joined Mr. Stewart, who had encamped at the head of La Rivière Maligne, where he waited our arrival. Stopped here the remainder of the day, being anxious to ascertain how the loaded canoes had weathered out the gale. The unsettled state of the wind prevented us from catching any fish, and we were obliged to retire again on this night to our stony couch supperless.

July 10th. Embarked at three A.M. and entered La Rivière Maligne. We had not proceeded far, when, in running down La Rapide Croche, our canoe came in contact with the rocks, by which eight ribs were broken, and it was otherwise badly damaged. This delayed us some time to repair. After launching again we had not proceeded through more than two or three miles of smooth water, when we got into a chain of shallow, crooked, and rocky rapids, in every one of which we sustained more or less injury. At eight A.M. passed the mouth of Rat River, a small stream; and within a quarter of nine, arrived at

the termination of La Rivière Maligne, where it discharges its waters into Cumberland-House Lake. This river is most appropriately named by the Canadians; for I believe, for its length, it is the most dangerous, cross-grained piece of navigation in the Indian country.

Owing to a head wind, we were unable to proceed until half past four P. M., when it veered about in our favour. We instantly hoisted sail, and made the Grande Traverse in three hours. Encamped at nine on a low muddy beach. Caught three small fish, which were boiled with some *tripe de rocher*, and afforded a spoonful of soup to each of the poor famished men.

July 11th. Started at two A. M., and a short distance above our encampment passed the lodge of a fisherman belonging to Cumberland House, from whom we obtained a most welcome and seasonable supply of three prime sturgeon. At four, made the Traverse de l'Île with a strong side breeze, when we landed to allow time to our hungry *voyageurs* to regale themselves on the fisherman's supply. A roaring fire quickly crackled on the beach, and in less than an hour the sturgeon

entirely disappeared. Proceeded on at six, and at seven arrived at Cumberland House, of which we found a gentleman named Fairis in charge, who treated us to an excellent breakfast of tea, fish, and steaks. Remained here during the day to recruit the men.

At this period the rival Companies had large forts here, which were well fortified ; but no breach of the peace had occurred during the winter between the respective traders. Friendly intercourse was out of the question, and a suspicious kind of armed neutrality was preserved on each side.

The country round Cumberland House is low, with a rich soil and thinly wooded. Land animals are scarce ; but the lake furnishes an abundance of white-fish, pike, and sturgeon. A few horses are employed about the forts chiefly for domestic purposes. The Indians who occasionally visit it, are a friendly well-disposed tribe, rather addicted to the use of ardent spirits.

July 12th. Sent off the loaded canoes at one P. M. ; but did not start ourselves till five, when we took our leave of Mr. Fairis, and shortly after-

wards encamped on an island not far from the fort.

July 13th. At three A.M. embarked, and entered the Saskachawaine River, a noble broad stream with a strong steady current, uninterrupted by rapids. According to Canadian computation, we made forty-nine leagues before night set in. I doubt the accuracy of this calculation, although we certainly made wonderful progress. The country on each side of the river is extremely low, and totally devoid of timber, but is dreadfully prolific in mosquitoes. Those insects swarmed about us in such myriads, that we in vain attempted to effect a landing, and to preserve the small quantity of blood still remaining in our veins, were constrained to pass the entire night on the water, driving quietly and calmly down the current. Numerous parties however of the enemy occasionally swarmed about our heads, which we partially protected by constant smoking.

Early on the morning of the 14th we entered Lac Vasé, and made the first traverse in Lac Bourbon with a fair wind, but in the midst of the most dangerous swells.

The wind having increased to a heavy gale, we were obliged to put ashore at eight o'clock on Martel's island, where we were detained until four P.M., when we were enabled to proceed. Passed the Grande Traverse of Bourbon Lake in moderate weather, and encamped at ten P.M. on a low stony island, which we selected in consequence of its being free from mosquitoes. Here we found several hundred gulls' eggs, on which we made an excellent supper. The weather for the last few days was extremely sultry, with thunder and lightning at intervals. This night we found it rather cool.

July 15th. Embarked at three A.M. Hard rain during the morning. On quitting Bourbon Lake we entered a long strait full of dangerous rapids, which brought us to Lac de Travers, about five miles in breadth. On leaving this we entered another chain of dangerous rapids, which finally brought us, at seven A.M., to the great rapid of Lac Winepic. This exceeded by far in body of water, and general magnitude, any rapid I had seen to the eastward of the Rocky Mountains. The canoes were let down for a distance of three

miles with double lines ; and in some places, where large rocks projected into the river, the lading was taken out, and carried to the other side of the point. Reached the foot of the rapid without any accident, at a quarter before nine, where we stopped to breakfast. Four Canadian free trappers, named Montreuil, Raçette, Martin, and son, were encamped at this place with their squaws. As it blew too hard to attempt entering Lake Winépic, we pitched our tents and partook of an excellent breakfast with old Martin, consisting of cherry-tree tea, with boiled and fried sturgeon. Late in the evening we were agreeably surprised by the arrival of a party bound to the interior, consisting of Messrs John D. Campbell, Alexander M'Donell, Samuel Black, and my old Columbian companion, M'Kay, with sixteen men, and two canoes. They pitched their tents alongside ours ; and as their garde-vins were tolerably well stocked, we sat up the entire night swallowing the news which they brought from the civilised world.

July 16th. Embarked at three A. M., having previously purchased from Martin six sturgeon for

each canoe. The morning was calm and cloudy as our little flotilla entered the great waters of Lake Winepic. About eight o'clock a smart breeze sprung up, which enabled us to hoist sail. At ten it increased to a close-reefer, and we scudded along for a couple of hours in glorious style; at times two or three miles from the shore. About noon, however, the gale became so violent that we were compelled to make the best of our way to a landing-place, where we pitched our tents for the day.

July 17th. It blew a perfect hurricane the entire day, which prevented us from attempting to embark.

July 18th. Shortly after midnight the gale moderated, and at half past one this morning we set off in calm weather. About sun-rise a favourable breeze sprang up, which wafted us on till twelve, when its increasing violence again obliged us to seek the shore, a few miles above La Pointe Maligne; a long rocky neck of land so called, which stretches some distance into the lake, and which in stormy weather is difficult to double. Remained here until six p. m., when the gale

having moderated, we again embarked, and continued on all night, alternately with the sail and the paddle.

July 19th. Light fair breezes wafted us on gently during the greater part of the day. They rather impeded than accelerated our progress; for by the custom of voyaging, the paddles are laid aside while the sail is hoisted, and the men very naturally keep it up while the smallest breath ruffles the water. At four passed l'Ile de St. Martin; and at eight, encamped at a point called La Tête de Picheu. Weather dark and calm during the night.

July 20th. Embarked at two A. M., with a stiff breeze, which brought us past La Tête de Brochet in fine style. The wind having increased to a hard gale, we put ashore at half past eleven, at the south side of the Traverse des Iles d'Ecorce, which it would be dangerous to attempt passing in stormy weather. About five it moderated, and we continued on with a fair wind all evening. The navigation here being rather dangerous, and the weather extremely dark, it was judged prudent to encamp at ten P. M., in a snug little cove on

the northern shore, about half-way between La Tête de Chien and Le Détroit du Duc. The country all round was in a state of conflagration, the smoke from which was quite suffocating. The scene was magnificent, and there was imparted to it a terrible degree of interest by the howling of wolves and other beasts of prey, which the extending flames forced from their long-frequented haunts.

The Aurora Borealis too appeared in all its splendid kaleidoscope variety of forms. At times a vertical battalion of strange figures seemed to rush in fierce encounter on an horizontal phalanx ; the whole mass became mingled, and in an instant flew off into new and more fantastic shapes. A loud and crackling noise occasionally struck on our ears, and it was difficult to determine whether it proceeded from the evanescent meteors above, or the falling timbers of the burning forest below.

July 21st. Left our encampment at half past two A.M. And at five passed through a small strait called Le Détroit du Duc, where the two shores approach to within a quarter of a mile of

each other. Beyond this however the lake again widens to five leagues.

At ten a smart breeze sprung up. Met two Indians (Sauteus) in a small canoe close to a rocky point called La Tête de Bœuf, from whom we purchased a small quantity of dried meat. At noon a hard gale came on, accompanied by thunder, heavy rain, and dangerous squalls: we however continued on for some time; but having shipped a good deal of water, we were forced to put ashore a few miles below another strait, named Le Détroit de la Tête de Bœuf, at which place we stopped for the remainder of the day.

July 22nd. Embarked at four A. M., with a steady breeze, which continued the greater part of the day. At noon doubled La Pointe de Metasse in a hard gale, which nearly filled the canoes. Here we breakfasted, and at two P. M. arrived at Fort Alexander, situate at the end of Lake Winepic, and at the entrance of Winepic River. Messrs. Heron and Crebassá were in charge, with three men and a dozen of women.

July 23rd. Remained at Fort Alexander until three P. M., when we bid adieu to our friend

Mr. Alexander Stewart, who was not to proceed beyond this place. We previously sent off the loaded canoes, at an early hour in the morning.

Winepic River is greatly obstructed by rapids ; at numbers of which portages must be made, or part of the goods unloaded. In the last case they are only called *Décharges*. It would be tiresome and useless to give the various names by which the Canadians distinguish those places. We passed six in the afternoon, and encamped at dusk at the head of Portage des Chênes.

July 24th. Set off at day-break, and encamped at seven P. M., after having made five portages during the day. In passing through Lac de Bonnet, we met Mr. Hughes, a proprietor, who with six men in a canoe was proceeding to Forts des Prairies, of which department he had charge. Weather extremely sultry.

July 25th. Commenced our morning's work by making seven portages "all in a row," at the upper end of which we stopped to breakfast and repair the canoes. Here we were overtaken by Mr. Crebassá in a light canoe with twelve men,

on his way to Fort William with despatches. Encamped late at the end of Portage Brûlé.

July 26th. We had much thunder and torrents of rain the greater part of last night, by which our goods and covering were quite wet. Remained a few hours at the encampment to dry our clothes, &c. At eight A.M. Mr. Leith, one of the proprietors, accompanied by Lieutenant Austin of the 37th foot, with thirteen of his regiment, and twelve well-armed Iroquois, arrived at our encampment. They were on their way to Red River, for the purpose of arresting all the delinquents they could catch, who had been concerned in the recent outrages. We stopped to breakfast with them. While it was preparing, I asked one of the soldiers, (an Irishman,) how he liked the mode of travelling in that country? "By J——, Sir," he replied, "it's awkward enough. Here we are cramped up in a bit of a canoe, put like chayney gods, with our muskets and knapsacks, striving to keep our clothes and 'coutrements clane. We haven't seen a sign of Christianity these two or three months; not a church, or chapel, or house, or garden; nor even a horse, or a cow, or a sheep;

nothing during the entire day; just rocks, rivers, lakes, portages, waterfalls, and large forests; bears roaring a tattoo every night, and wolves howling a *réveille* every morning. O! to the devil I bob it!—Give me India or Spain, with all their hard fighting, before such an infernal, outlandish, unchristian country.”

Parted from those gentlemen a little after nine o'clock, and shortly after overtook the brigade of loaded canoes. Passed two lodges of Sauteus, and encamped late a few miles above Portage de l'Ile. Weather during the day excessively sultry.

July 27th. Embarked at day-break. About five A. M. Colonel Dickson, and a gentleman named Gale, passed us on their route to Red River. Their journey also was connected with the investigation ordered by the Governor General. About an hour afterwards we met Messrs Simon, M'Gillivray jun., and Roderick M'Leod, with two canoes, bound for Athabasca: we remained to breakfast with them, and stopped a couple of hours. A smacking breeze during the greater part of the day gave the men considerable relief from paddling.

Encamped at seven P.M. a few miles below the Portage des Rats.

July 28th. Passed Rat Portage early. A few lodges of natives were encamped at it, from whom we could purchase nothing. On quitting this portage we entered Lac du Bois, with tolerably calm weather. We employed the paddle and sail alternately, until one P.M., when we arrived at a long and narrow peninsula, which stretches a considerable distance into the lake. A portage was made across this point in a short time, by which the tedious and circuitous passage round its extremity was avoided. We observed great quantities of wild rice growing here, which the Canadians called *la folle avoine*. Had a fair wind all the afternoon, and encamped at half past seven, within three leagues of the Grande Traverse.

July 29th. Observed some faint appearances of the Aurora Borealis during the night. Set off at day-break, and at ten A.M. passed the Grande Traverse with a light breeze. This brought us to Lac la Pluie River, at the entrance of which we passed a few natives. During the evening passed

a Mr. Grant, with a few men, who were returning in a canoe to the fort at Lac la Pluie, from a provision voyage. Encamped at seven P. M.

July 30th. Set off at the usual hour. At two P. M. met Mr. M'Pherson, with a brigade of eleven loaded canoes, bound for Athabasca. Not a *voyageur* in the whole party, at the period we met them, could be accused of sobriety. Encamped at dusk.

July 31st. At nine A. M. arrived at the fort of Lac la Pluie, in which we found a number of gentlemen, guides, interpreters, and *engagés*; some outward-bound, and others belonging to various departments destined for the interior. Among them was my old esteemed friend, Mr. La Rocque, whose name frequently occurs in the eventful scenes of the Columbia, to which place he was now about returning with a reinforcement of forty men, principally Iroquois Indians, from Canada.

We remained seven days at Lac la Pluie, waiting the arrival of goods from Fort William, and making the necessary distribution of men, &c. for the different trading posts. This place is a

considerable depôt of provisions ; so that during our stay we fared sumptuously on cakes, pemmican, tea, coffee, wild fowl, fish, and deer ; with a moderate modicum of rum and shrub. We had two excellent fiddlers ; and as several of the gentlemen had wives, we got up three or four balls, in which the exhilarating amusement of the “ light fantastic toe ” was kept up to a late hour in the morning. We walked through no lazy minuets ; we had no simpering quadrilles ; no languishing half-dying waltzes ; no,—ours was the exercise of health ; the light lively reel, or the rattling good old-fashioned country dance, in which the graceful though untutored movements of the North-West females, would have put to the blush many of the more refined votaries of Terpsichore.

Several lodges of Sotoes, or as the Canadians spell the word Sauteus, were encamped near the fort. They were formerly a very powerful tribe ; but the small-pox, war, and rum, have considerably diminished their numbers. They are greatly addicted to the use of ardent spirits, and make a point never to commence a barter of their furs until a suitable quantity of rum be given to

them gratuitously. When they recover from the intoxication produced by this preliminary debauch, they proceed to business. A certain portion of their furs is set apart for a gun, another for ammunition, a third for blankets, a fourth for tomahawks or knives, a fifth for tobacco, a sixth for the wants of the wife and children, and then a portion for rum.

I visited the encampment of this party after they had finished their trade. The men were gambling and drinking to excess. While joy sparkled in the eyes of some, others, whose losses had been great, looked like demons. A dispute arose between two fine young men respecting a knife: one gave his antagonist a blow across the face, upon which the other darted to his lodge, seized his gun, and taking a deadly aim shot the aggressor through the body. He was in the act of drinking rum out of a pint measure, when he received the fatal bullet. He did not start, no feature changed, and he walked on, singing a war-song, carrying the rum in his hand, until he raised his foot to pass over the threshold of his lodge, when he fell dead at the door.

A scene of indescribable confusion followed. Each warrior ran for his gun, dagger, or tomahawk, while the women and children flew towards the fort for protection. Fearful that an indiscriminate massacre would be the consequence, a number of gentlemen rushed among them, and with much persuasion, joined to some force, succeeded in disarming the more violent, and restoring tranquillity. Compensation was ultimately made to the relatives of the deceased ; and so terminated this drunken homicide.

CHAPTER XIII.

Leave Rainy Lake—Messrs. M'Gillivray and La Rocque—
Sketch of Messrs. Wentzel and M'Neill—Great falls of
the mountain—Description of Fort William, its inhabi-
tants, &c.

THURSDAY, August 7th. At two P. M. took
our departure from Lac la Pluie for Fort William,
in two light canoes, containing nine *voyageurs*
each. Messrs. Robert Henry and Alexander
M'Tavish were in one; and Messrs. Ferdinand
Wentzel, Hector M'Neill, and myself, were in
the other. Mr. La Rocque and party set off at
the same time for the Columbia; and Messrs.
Joseph M'Gillivray and William Henry for Atha-
basca and Lesser Slave Lake.

By the new distribution, I was deprived of the

pleasure of my friend M'Tavish's company, which I much regretted; however, as we were to proceed together in the same brigade to Canada, the separation was infinitely less painful than that which I experienced in parting from my old friends M'Gillivray and La Rocque.

We had spent many happy days together on the banks of the distant Columbia. Our studies and amusements were the same. We had suffered in common many privations incident to that dangerous district; and whether in a canoe, or on horseback; over a hit of backgammon, or on the midnight watch, there was a community of feeling that peculiarly endeared us to each other. I was about re-entering the busy scenes of civilised life, while they were returning to encounter all the dangers and hardships attendant on a trader's occupation; and the pressure therefore of the parting grasp was rendered doubly painful by the reflection, that in all human probability we should never meet again.

Those only who knew them as I did, and were acquainted with their many excellent and social qualities, "their scorn for wrong, their zeal for

truth," can appreciate the justice of this poor tribute to the manliness of their character, and the steady sincerity of their friendship.

About an hour after quitting the fort, we made one portage; and shortly after passed a small trading-post of Lord Selkirk's.

Encamped about six P. M. on an island in the lake.

August 8th. Embarked at half past one A. M. Had a steady breeze all the morning. Made several portages. Messrs. H. Mackenzie and M'Lean, of the North-West Company, passed us on their way to Winepic River, and shortly after we met six canoes belonging to the Hudson's-Bay Company, twenty-five days from Point Meuron, bound to the interior. Passed several Indian encampments, at which we procured a quantity of wild rice. This we boiled, and took in preference to the sturgeon we were furnished with at the fort, and which had now a very *mauvaise odeur*. Encamped alone this evening, in consequence of Messrs. Henry and M'Tavish having very good-naturedly gone on ahead, and left us to manage matters as well as we could. It was not, however, with my friend

M'Tavish's consent that we were left behind ; for I knew he would have preferred remaining with us, had his own wishes been consulted ; but when any of the little great men of the North-West obtain a command, they imagine they have no legitimate method of showing their temporary superiority, but by leaving their subordinate officers as far *en arrière* as possible.

I derived much pleasure from the conversation of my two new *compagnons de voyage*, Messrs. Wentzel and M'Neill. The former had been upwards of sixteen years in the Indian country, principally in the department of Athabasca, and had obtained a thorough knowledge of the manners, customs, and language of the natives of that quarter. He was an active enterprising trader ; but, having no family connexions to place his claims in the prominent point of view which they ought to occupy, and being moreover of an honest unbending disposition, his name was struck out of the house-list of favourite clerks intended for proprietors, and he had the vexation to see many young men promoted over his head, several of whom had never slept a night with a hungry

stomach, or seen a shot fired in anger. Disgust followed disappointment, and he was now proceeding to Canada, determined, if justice were not rendered him by the directors, to quit the service of the Company for ever.*

M'Neill belonged to a highly respectable family in the north of Ireland, and had at an early age entered the — regiment of foot as an ensign. Owing, however, to a serious quarrel with his commanding officer, he was obliged to quit the service; and being too proud to seek any assistance from his relatives, whom he had reason to suspect were displeased at his conduct, he re-entered the army as a private soldier. He was quickly appointed a serjeant, and behaved with distinguished bravery throughout the peninsular campaigns, in which he was twice wounded.

After the battle of the Pyrenees he was promoted to the rank of serjeant-major; and upon the termination of hostilities in the south of France, his regiment with others were ordered

* This gentleman is the same whose name so frequently occurs in Captain Franklin's Journal.

from Bourdeaux to Canada. His American services were of short duration. Peace speedily followed Sir George Prevost's disgraceful retreat from Plattsburg, and the battalion to which M'Neill belonged was ordered to be disbanded. This unwelcome intelligence reached him at a period when he had every reason to hope, that he would have been speedily restored to his former rank. Not wishing to return home, he preferred accepting his discharge in Canada, where he was shortly after introduced to one of the agents of the North-West Company, which then stood in need of a few fighting characters, to make a stand against the encroachments of their rivals.

M'Neill's face was in itself a letter of recommendation. His countenance was a ruddy bronze, with a noble nose of the Nassau cut, a superb pair of full-blown Cossack whiskers, and an interesting transverse sabre-wound over his right eye. Valour was then at a premium, and M'Neill's character, joined to his warlike visage, at once secured him a handsome engagement. On his arrival in the interior, an opportunity quickly offered for trying his hand at his old profession.

He was despatched with a few men to intercept a party of Indians who were loaded with furs, in order to prevent them falling into the hands of the Hudson's-Bay Company. He found, however, that he had been anticipated by a clerk of the latter establishment. Warm words took place between them, and a duel was the consequence. M'Neill drove a ball through his adversary's hat, and there the affair ended. Some time after he was engaged in two broad-sword encounters, in which he wounded one of his opponents, and disarmed the other. His fame soon became established; and wherever he appeared, opposition vanished.

A year of inactivity followed his first campaign; and as no fighting reinforcement appeared among the ranks of the enemy, he became dissatisfied with his situation. A quarrel occurred between him and the proprietors. He alledged that he was badly treated, and did not experience the attention to which he considered himself justly entitled; while the latter stated, that his unruly conduct was a terrible example of insubordination to all the younger clerks in the establishment; and that

in his bearing to his superiors, he showed more of the *major* than of the *serjeant-major*.

Without stopping to inquire upon whom the greater share of blame rested, it is sufficient to say, that the gentlemen of the interior were *graciously* pleased to dispense with his services a year before the termination of his engagement, and generously allowed him the full amount of his salary for the entire period. He was now on his way to Canada, uncertain as to his future course of life; but so strongly imbued with a dislike of the Indian country, that he swore he would rather carry a halbert all his life, than roll in a coach and four, obtained by cheating the poor Indians.

August 9th. Embarked at half past three A. M. Made four portages during the day, and passed a few Sotoes in canoes. Embarked at eight o'clock in Lac d'Eturgeon. The scenery, since we left Lac la Pluie, is much more diversified with woods and rising grounds, than below that establishment. Weather very warm for the last three days.

August 10th. At eight A. M. made the Portage des Deux Rivières, and at nine, that of Les Morts,

at which we breakfasted. Arrived at the Portage des Français at half-past one P. M., and, owing to its length, and bad pathway, did not finish it until half past seven. Encamped, at dusk, at the entrance of Rivière des Français. Had a great deal of thunder and heavy rain during the afternoon.

August 11th. Made the Portage de la Pente at ten A. M. At noon passed the Portage des Barrils, and entered Mille-Lac with a fair breeze. At five P. M. passed an uninhabited house, built last year for a trading-post by order of Lord Selkirk. Encamped at eight, in a handsome savannah, close to a river which takes its name from the place (La Savanne.)

August 12th. Started at day-break. At ten met an old guide, named Joseph Paul, in charge of a brigade of seven loaded canoes destined for English River. At eleven, arrived at Savannah portage, which we did not finish until three P. M. At five passed the Portage de Milieu; at which we met a single canoe heavily laden, destined for the Red River. At dusk we made the Portage de la Prairie, and encamped on the shores of another

Lac Froid ; a small body of clear water, so called from its extreme frigidity.

August 13th. Found the air very chilly during the night, which some of our Canadian *Savans* attributed to the proximity of Lac Froid. A heavy dew also fell. Embarked at half past four; and at half past five, made the Portage de l'Eau Froide, the air round which we found extremely cold. We continued down a chain of small rapids, in one of which we were obliged to unload. After this we descended a small river, with low banks, and a smooth current; in which, at three P. M., we met Messrs. John George M'Tavish and J. Thompson, on their way to the interior. Encamped at seven, at Lac des Chiens, where we were joined by a Mr. Connolly, a senior clerk for many years in charge of one of the principal trading-posts in the interior. We encamped together; and he invited us to his tent, where we made a sensible impression on the contents of a well-stocked garde-vin. This gentleman left Ireland when a boy, with his family, who settled in Canada. He had at this period been seventeen years in the Company's service, and was to be

elected a partner the following year. He was *un véritable bon garçon*, and an Emerald of the first water.

August 14th. At four A. M. parted from our worthy host of the tent, when each pursued his different route. At six, met Mr. Duncan M'Dougall, proceeding to Winepic River in a loaded canoe. We stopped a couple of hours with him, and breakfasted together. This gentleman had been one of the directors of the late Pacific Fur Company, and had subsequently joined the North-West. He was one of our party crossing the mountains ; but at the English River, he set off in a light canoe with Mr. Bethune for Fort William, from which place he was now returning to his winter-quarters.

Came to the termination of the lake about eleven o'clock, and finished the Portage des Chiens at noon. The country about this place is very handsome, and the view from the rising grounds about the portage highly picturesque and diversified. At one, passed another portage, called Le Petit Chien ; and in the course of the evening passed several rapids, at six of which we were

obliged to unload and let the canoes down with the line. Encamped at dusk at the Portage des Cédres. From Lac des Chiens the country assumes quite a hilly, and in some places a mountainous, appearance. The timber too, particularly the pine and spruce, becomes much larger, and nearly approaches the magnitude of the trees on the Columbia.

August 15th. At five A. M. made the Portage de l'Île; previous to which we were obliged to unload at two rapids. At eight, made the Portage Ecarté; and soon after, a loud and roaring noise announced our approach to the great falls of Portage de la Montagne, which we reached a little before ten o'clock.

This stupendous cataract is second only to Niagara. It is one hundred and fifty-six feet in height, and upwards of two hundred in breadth. The river, in its advance to the fall, moves slowly and majestically forward until its course is interrupted by a huge mass of rough craggy rocks; over whose dark grey front it rushes with a tremendous noise resembling distant thunder.

We stopped to breakfast at the foot of the

cataract, the spray from which dashed over us. It was a melancholy-looking spot. The morning was dark and cloudy, and not a ray of sun-shine appeared to enliven the dread abyss; owing to which circumstance, and the banks on each side being high, rocky, and thickly wooded, we were deprived of seeing that beautiful phenomenon of the prismatic rainbow, so often observed at Niagara and other great falls. The scene was one of sombre grandeur; and, however it might have been relished by a philosopher, or an embryo Demosthenes, was well calculated to damp the animal spirits of the most vivacious disciple of Momus.

For six leagues below this cataract there is a chain of shallow rapids, down which we had to pass the canoes with the cod-lines. Encamped late at the foot of the last rapid, without a mouthful of any substance for dinner or supper; indeed we had been in a starving state for the last four days, having had only a scanty meal per diem. In the course of the day we met a brigade of loaded canoes, bound for Forts des Prairies, and another for Lac la Pluie.

August 16th. Embarked at day-break; and at six passed Point Meuron, one of Lord Selkirk's establishments, so called from a number of De Meuron's regiment having been employed in building it. The situation is handsome; but the settlement consists of a few straggling huts, miserably provided with the common necessities of life.

At eight o'clock we arrived at Fort William, as the welcome sound of the breakfast-bell was summoning the inmates to their morning's repast. We instantly repaired to the *Salle à manger*, and over a bowl of coffee, fresh eggs, excellent hot cakes, and prime cold venison, quickly forgot our late privations.

Fort William is the great emporium for the interior. An extensive assortment of merchandise is annually brought hither from Montreal, by large canoes, or the Company's vessels on the lakes, which, in return, bring down the produce of the wintering posts to Canada, from whence it is shipped for England. A number of the partners and clerks, whose turn of rotation has not arrived for going to Montreal, assemble here every sum-

mer, and deposit the furs which they purchase during the winter, when they obtain a fresh supply of trading goods for the ensuing season. Those on their way to Canada also remain some time previous to their final departure. In addition to these, one or two of the principal directors, and several clerks, come up every spring from Montreal to make the necessary changes, and superintend the distribution of the merchandise for the wintering parties. Fort William may therefore be looked upon as the metropolitan post of the interior, and its fashionable season generally continues from the latter end of May to the latter end of August. During this period, good living and festivity predominate; and the luxuries of the dinner-table compensate in some degree for the long fasts and short commons experienced by those who are stationed in the remote posts. The *voyageurs* too enjoy their Carnival, and between rum and baubles the hard-earned wages of years are often dissipated in a few weeks.

We arrived too late to see Fort William in its prime. A great portion of the interior aristocracy had departed for their winter destinations; and

most of those outward-bound had set off before our arrival. A small portion of respectability, however, remained; and during the two days that we stopped, our time was passed agreeably enough.

The following is a list of the company who assembled at the dinner-table: viz. Messrs. John M'Donald (le Borgne*), Haldane, Ronald Cameron, James Grant (le Borgne), and Doctor M'Loughlin. The above comprised all the members of the proprietary present; the doctor having two shares in consequence of long services, and being resident physician at the Fort.

Among the clerks were, Captain R. M'Kenzie, nearly fifty years of age, twenty-five of which he had spent in the Indian country; Mr. Crebassá, also a North-Wester of twenty-five years standing, who was now on his way to Canada to abide his trial, on certain charges preferred against him by some of Lord Selkirk's agents; Mr. Wentzel, my travelling companion, of whom I have already

* So called by the Canadians, owing to the gentleman having lost one eye.

spoken; Mr. Cummings, thirteen years in the Company's service, and presumptive heir to a partnership; Mr. Alexander M'Tavish, from the Columbia, going to Canada from ill health; Mr. Hector M'Neill, from Athabasca, quitting the country in consequence of having no one to fight with. There were also from the establishment in Montreal, Messrs. Grant, M'Robb, Cowie, M'Lean, and Robinson; and at the end of the table a long list of worthies, consisting of hieroglyphic clerks, interpreters, and guides, who are looked upon as warrant officers, and at headquarters are permitted to dine with the mess.

The dining-hall is a noble apartment, and sufficiently capacious to entertain two hundred. A finely executed bust of the late Simon M'Tavish is placed in it, with portraits of various proprietors. A full-length likeness of Nelson, together with a splendid painting of the battle of the Nile, also decorate the walls, and were presented by the Hon. William M'Gillivray, to the Company. At the upper end of the hall there is a very large map of the Indian country, drawn with great accuracy by Mr. David Thompson, astronomer to

the Company, and comprising all their trading-posts, from Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean, and from Lake Superior to Athabasca and Great Slave Lake.

This immense territory is very little known, except to those connected with the Company; and if it did not interfere with their interests, the publication of Mr. Thompson's map would prove a most valuable addition to our geographical knowledge of the interior of that great continent.

The buildings at Fort William consist of a large house, in which the dining-hall is situated, and in which the gentleman in charge resides; the Council-house; a range of snug buildings for the accommodation of the people from the interior; a large counting-house; the Doctor's residence; extensive stores for the merchandise and furs; a forge; various work-shops, with apartments for the mechanics, a number of whom are always stationed here. There is also a prison for refractory *voyageurs*. The whole is surrounded by wooden fortifications, flanked by bastions, and is sufficiently strong to withstand any attack from the natives. Outside the fort is a ship-yard, in

which the Company's vessels on the lake are built and repaired. The kitchen-garden is well stocked, and there are extensive fields of Indian corn and potatoes. There are also several head of cattle, with sheep, hogs, poultry, &c., and a few horses for domestic use.

The country about the fort is low, with a rich moist soil. The air is damp, owing to frequent rains, and the constant exhalation from Lake Superior. This produces agues; and numbers of the people who have wintered here, have been more or less afflicted with that troublesome disorder.

In addition to the persons whose names I have already mentioned, we also found at Fort William, Captain Miles M'Donnell, a gentleman connected with Lord Selkirk's establishment, in the custody of a constable named Fitzpatrick, on certain charges preferred against him by some members of the North-West Company, and for which he was about to be conducted to Canada. There was also a Mr. Joillette, a notary from Assomption, who came up as secretary to the commissioners, Messrs. Coltman and Fletcher; by the

latter of whom he was discharged from his functions, and was now waiting for a passage to Montréal. Besides the above, there was a subaltern's detachment of the 70th foot, and a number of disbanded soldiers, who had belonged to De Meuron's regiment, and who were ready and willing to cut the throats of all persons opposed to the interest of their employers.

Most part of the *voyageurs*, soldiers, Indians, half-breeds, &c., were encamped outside the fort in tents, leathern lodges, mat-covered huts, or wigwams. On inquiry, I ascertained that the aggregate number of the persons in and about the establishment was composed of natives of the following countries : viz. England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Switzerland, United States of America, the Gold Coast of Africa, the Sandwich Islands, Bengal, Canada, with various tribes of Indians, and a mixed progeny of Creoles, or half-breeds. What a strange medley !—Here were assembled, on the shores of this inland sea, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Sun-worshippers, men from all parts of the world, and whose creeds

were "wide as the poles asunder," united in one common object, and bowing down before the same idol.*

An observatory (rather a crazy structure) stands in the court-yard of the fort. From it the eye takes in an extensive view of flat country, thickly wooded, with the bold shores of Thunder Island at a distance, rising abruptly out of Lake Superior; while immediately around the fort the scene was enlivened by animating groups of women, soldiers, *voyageurs*, and Indians, dancing, singing, drinking, and gambling; in their features comprising all the shades of the human species, and in their dress, all the varied hues of the rainbow.

* We had one East-Indian from Bengal, two Negroes, and the De Meurons were a mixture of nearly every nation in Europe.

CHAPTER XIV.

Enter Lake Superior—St. Mary's Falls—Sketch of Mr. Johnston—Lake Huron—French River—Lake Nipising—Arrive on the Ottawa—A Back-woodsman—Chaudière Falls—Hull—Longue Sault—Mr. Grant—Laughable mistake—Mr. M'Donald Le Prêtre—Mr. M'Gilles—Snyder's Tavern—Lake of the Two Mountains—La Chine—Arrive at Montreal.

August 18th. Received our sailing orders and provisions for our voyage last night; and at six A. M. this morning took our departure from Fort William, in company with a brigade of loaded canoes. Messrs. Wentzel, M'Neill, and I travelled in the same canoe. The day was remarkably warm and calm. Our route lay along the northern shore of Lake Superior, and we encamped at seven P. M. on a stony beach. The country ap-

peared to be generally high and rocky. Some handsome open spots were visible at intervals along shore; and other parts were thickly wooded.

August 19th. This day was also calm, and we continued on with the paddle until dusk, when we put ashore in a small bay. The general appearance of the land was rocky, diversified however by several beautiful situations admirably calculated for settlements.

August 20th. Embarked at day-break. The shores appeared higher, and were indented with larger bays than we had yet seen. We had several slight showers. About noon it came on to blow rather fresh, and at two P. M. we were obliged to put ashore from the violence of the gale, which kept us stationary the remainder of the day.

August 21st. Started at three A. M. At six a hard breeze sprung up, accompanied by heavy rain; and as the lowering appearance of the clouds portended no favourable change, we put ashore at ten o'clock at one of the Company's trading-posts, called *Le Pic*. The house is handsomely situated on the shores of a small bay. A proprietor was

the charge. He was on the beach when we approached in shore ; and on seeing us disembark, he turned on his heel and retreated into the fort. This movement foreboded any thing but a hospitable reception ; and we therefore pitched our tent, and prepared for breakfast. As Wentzel had formerly known him, he paid him a visit ; but M'Neill and I preferred remaining in the tent, from which no friendly invitation offered to dislodge us.

Between one and two P. M. the rain ceased, and enabled us to quit the dominions of the surly landlord of the Pic. A stiff breeze wafted us on rapidly the remainder of the day, and we encamped late in a small bay. After leaving the Pic the shores appeared quite rocky, with little timber, and the interior mountainous.

August 22d. Had a strong breeze all day, which at half past four P. M. brought us to the River de la Chienne, close to the great bay of *Michipicoten*, to cross which in stormy weather is rather hazardous. We therefore encamped at the river, where we remained all night. During the day we passed several islands, which, like the northern shore of

the lake, are rocky ; they are also thinly wooded, and, as the *voyageurs* told me, possess a very un-productive soil.

August 23d. Rose at three ; but the threatening aspect of the clouds deterred us from embarking until half past four A. M., when we commenced crossing the bay, or, as the *voyageurs* called it, the *Grande Traverse de Michipicoten*. We made use of the paddle and the sail by turns, and finished the traverse in five hours. At noon arrived at a point called *Gargue en trois*, from which a strong breeze brought us, at half past four, to Montreal island, on which we encamped. The northern coast more rocky and mountainous than yesterday.

August 24th. Embarked at four, in calm weather, which about seven increased to a breeze, that brought us on rapidly till ten, when it obliged us to land at Point Mamas. Here we overtook Mr. Fletcher, a barrister, and superintendant of the police at Quebec. This gentleman had been appointed, by the Governor-General, joint commissioner with Mr. Coltman, to inquire into the causes of the various affrays between the two Companies, and was now on his way to Canada

with the result of his mission. We remained wind-bound at this place until three P. M., when, the gale moderating, we continued on in company with Mr. Fletcher. Encamped at dusk at the opening of the bay of Batchiwina, one of the most extensive inlets on the northern shores of Lake Superior. Mr. Fletcher invited us to his tent, which was plentifully stocked with *toutes les bonnes choses* calculated to render travelling in such a country very agreeable; and as our Fort William supply of luxuries was rather in a consumptive state, this gentleman in the kindest manner helped us most liberally from his store.

From Point Mamas to this place the shore is rather low, and much less rugged than any part we had hitherto seen.

August 25th. Embarked at day-break with a fair breeze, and made the traverse of the Batchiwina without using a paddlé.* At one P. M.

* This is a dangerous traverse. The year before, as Mr. Kenneth Mackenzie and fourteen men were crossing it in a gale of wind under heavy sail, their canoe upset, and that gentleman and ten of the *voyageurs* were unfortunately drowned.

doubled a cape called by the Canadians *Le Gros Cap*, at which place the lake suddenly narrows to little better than a mile in breadth. The country on both sides is low and well wooded.

At five P.M. arrived at St. Mary's Falls, or, as the Canadians name the place, *Le Saut de Sainte Marie*, at which Lake Superior terminates, and discharges its waters into Lake Huron. The North-West Company had extensive stores at this place, of which a Mr. Kennedy had charge. Mr. Fletcher stopped with us at the Company's house, where we had an excellent dinner of fish, wild fowl, and deer.

The southern side of St. Mary's forms part of the territory of the United States; the northern belongs to Great Britain. On the American side there are several settlements, in consequence of which the North-Westerners regard this place as the commencement of civilisation. We crossed over in the evening in company with Mr. Fletcher, from the stern of whose canoe a British jack was flying. On landing, we were received in the kindest manner by Mr. Johnston, the principal inhabitant of the place, who politely invited us to

his house, where we spent a few hours. He returned with us to the Company's establishment, and the night was far advanced before we separated.

August 26th. In consequence of the canoes requiring some repairs, we remained at St. Mary's Falls this day, which we passed in the most agreeable manner at the residence of Mr. Johnston.

The history of this gentleman is remarkable. He was a member of a highly respectable family in the county Antrim, and in early life moved in the most fashionable circles in Ireland. A circumstance, however, which blasted his early hopes of happiness, induced him to abandon his native country, and about twenty-eight years before this period he arrived in America. After wandering for some time about the continent, he made his way to St. Mary's Falls, where he shortly became a great favourite with the Indians, and entered extensively into the fur trade. The chief had only one child, a daughter. She was a beautiful and interesting girl, and, although sought for as a wife by many of the youthful warriors, she declined all their offers. Her father was old and

infirm, and wished her to marry before his death; but still his affection for his daughter was so great, that he would not exercise his parental authority in compelling her to choose. It soon, however, became apparent that Mr. Johnston was the object of her choice. For some time previous, as he told me himself, he began to experience the truth of St. Pierre's opinion, that "man without woman, and woman without man, are imperfect beings in the order of nature." On learning, therefore, that he had found favour in the sight of this youthful Indian, he at once came to the resolution of rendering both himself and her perfect. Her father consented, and they were married according to the rites and ceremonies of the tribe. Death shortly after deprived the old man of his command; and Mr. Johnston, whose wisdom and courage were highly admired by the Indians, was unanimously elected his successor.

Some years after his union with the chief's daughter, an extensive property fell to him in the north of Ireland, to which place he repaired in order to take possession. While there, offers of a tempting nature were made to induce him to

reside in the country of his nativity, but his fealty to the "Lady of the lake" could not be shaken ; and the moment he had finished his business, he hastened back to St. Mary's. His family consisted of two sons and two daughters, and a Miss Campbell, an interesting girl, whose father had a few years before been shot in a duel by a Mr. Crawford. One son was employed in a public department in Canada, and the other was an officer in a local corps. The mother received us in a friendly manner at the door, but did not join us at the breakfast or dinner table.

Mr. Johnston has extensive plantations of corn, potatoes, &c., with a beautifully arranged and well-stocked fruit and flower garden. During the late short war with America, he induced one thousand Indian warriors (of whom he took the command) to join the British forces, and rendered important services while so employed.

He suffered severely for his loyalty ; for, during his absence with the army, a predatory party of Americans attacked his place in the hope of obtaining a large quantity of valuable furs, which they were informed he had in his stores, but

which a short time before his departure he had fortunately removed. Disappointed in their hopes of plunder, they burned his house, out-offices, &c.; destroyed the greater part of his valuable stock, and carried away every portable article they could find.* At the period, therefore, of our visit the buildings were quite new, and were constructed with much taste. The furniture was elegant, and the library select and excellent.

Mr. Johnston possessed a highly cultivated mind, much improved by extensive reading. He had made many excursions round the shores of Lake Superior, and along the banks of its tributary streams, in which scientific researches imparted a pleasing variety to the business of an Indian trader. His collections of specimens were varied and well selected; and if the result of his inquiries be published, they will, I have no doubt, prove a valuable addition to our geological knowledge of interior America.

* I met Mr. Johnston a few years afterwards in England, and was happy to learn that he succeeded in obtaining from Government, compensation for the losses he sustained on the above occasion.

Mr. Johnston was an enthusiastic admirer of Indian manners and customs ; and if a word were uttered condemnatory of their morals, he poured forth a torrent of eloquent, but vituperative satire against the fashionable follies of the civilised world ; which, as it was felt he spoke *jure uxoris*, if it failed to establish the superior morality of Indian manners, silenced at least all opposition.

Two retired traders, named Nolin and Erman-tinger, also resided on the same side with Mr. Johnston, a short distance below his house. They had Indian wives, and large families, and appeared to be in comfortable circumstances.

Mr. Johnston has plenty of cattle, hogs, sheep, domestic fowl, &c. ; and has also a very good windmill close to his dwelling-house. Fish is found in great abundance, particularly trout. They are of enormous size—sixty pounds is not uncommon ; and Mr. Johnston assured me he saw one caught, in Lake Superior, which weighed ninety pounds !

He treated us to an excellent dinner, fine wine, and a few tumblers of *Irish mountain dew*, which had never seen the face of an exciseman. We left

Mr. Johnston's at dusk ; but he crossed over with us, and we spent together another night of social and intellectual enjoyment.

August 27th. Embarked at seven A. M., and bid adieu to the worthy Hibernian chieftain of St. Mary's. Entered Lake Huron with a stiff breeze, which kept up during the greater part of the day, with rain at intervals. We were obliged to land at five P. M., owing to the increasing violence of the gale. Passed a number of islands, for every one of which the Canadians have peculiar names. The part of the lake through which we passed this day was rather narrow, the shores on each side being visible. Country low, and thickly wooded.

August 28th. Left our encampment at day-break with a fair wind, shortly after which the lake suddenly widens, and we quickly lost sight of the southern shore. At noon passed the traverse opposite Michillimackana, and at two passed the River de Tresallons. Encamped late on an island. Several smart showers during the day. Country low and woody.

August 29th. Set off at five A. M. Passed a number of islands during the day. They were

generally rocky, and covered with pine, birch, dwarf oak, and immense quantities of the Indian weed called *Sacacommis*. Encamped at six P. M. on an island, in company with a brigade of loaded canoes, under the charge of a guide named Guillaume d'Eau. Weather excessively sultry, with slight rain.

August 30th. Started at four A. M. Passed nearly as many islands as yesterday, and much of the same appearance. The shore of the main land still low and rocky, with a few handsome spots. Sultry weather and light breezes. Encamped on an island at seven P. M.

August 31st. Embarked at four. Charming weather all day. Some of the islands we passed were rather long and fertile. The north shore of the lake still low, but during the day we observed a few ridges of rather high hills some distance in the interior. Encamped at half past five at the entrance of Rivière des Français, at which place we quitted Lake Huron, on our way to the Ottawa. The country about the mouth of the river is rather low and swampy.

September 1st. At half past four A. M. com-

menced ascending the *Rivière des Français*; and at seven passed a rapid called *La Petite Faucille*, at which we were obliged to carry the greater part of the lading. At half past three p. m. came to a small cascade a few feet perpendicular, called the *Portage de Récollet*, previous to which we passed several small rapids. The Canadians say this portage obtained its present name in consequence of a Franciscan friar having made his way to it as a missionary, for the purpose of converting the Indians, during the period that the French had possession of Canada. He lived to an old age, and during his last illness was attended by the natives; who, after his death, deposited his remains in a grave behind his solitary hut. During the remainder of the day the river was uninterrupted by any rapids; and we encamped, at six p. m., close to a few lodges of Indians. Weather very sultry all day.

September 2nd. Embarked at half past three. Passed several small rapids in the morning. At eight made the *Portage de Parisien*, and at eleven passed the three discharges of *La Grande Faucille*, *Les Pins*, and *Portage des Pins*, all short. The

banks of the river thickly wooded, with a rocky soil. At four P. M. made the Portage de Chaudière, at the head of the river, where it takes its rise from Lake Nipising. Encamped at five, a short distance in the lake. Passed a free trader named La Ronde, on his way to Montreal, in a canoe with fourteen packs of beaver, and nearly as many children.

September 3rd. Started at two A. M., with calm weather, which continued until we got about half-way over the Grande Traverse, when we were struck by a hard squall, which nearly filled our canoes. At ten A. M. arrived at a snug house belonging to Mr. La Ronde's son, at which we breakfasted. Here we left Lake Nipising, and entered a small stream which falls into it, and which is called La Petite Rivière. Its banks are low, with a rich soil, and well wooded. About two miles up the river made rather a long portage called La Vase, above which a dam has been constructed, for the purpose of keeping some water in the channel, which at this place is little better than a ditch. We floated the canoes through this canal about two miles, when we were

compelled to stop and make another pretty long portage, named the Middle Vase, at the end of which we encamped.

September 4th. Rose at five A. M., after suffering the most dreadful torments all night from the combined attacks of the mosquitoes and sand-flies, which insinuated themselves through the smallest aperture of the tent, and fastened their infernal fangs on every part of our bodies, the neck, cheeks, and forehead in particular. At nine A. M. made another portage, called the Last Vase. It is a mile and a half in length, full of fine trees, with an excellent road, and a rich black soil. From the Middle Vase to this there is a narrow communication by water, sufficiently large to float a canoe and no more. Remained encamped at the end of and portage all day, in consequence of heavy rain, the of the canoes wanting repairs.

September 5th. Embarked at half past four A. M., and crossed a small lake about four hundred yards wide, at the end of which we made the Décharge de Sable. From this we had a clear navigation of four leagues, which brought us to the Décharge de la Tortue. At half past ten, made a portage called

Mauvaise de la Musique, the road of which is extremely awkward and dangerous. A few years before, a man while carrying a canoe fell against a large rock, by which his head was completely severed from his body. His grave is in the middle of the pathway. At half past twelve, made the portage des Pins de la Musique; and at half past four made another portage called *Les Talons*, the road in which is bad and rocky, and we were obliged to repair the canoes after crossing it. Within a few minutes of six, made the *Décharge de la Carpe*; and at half past seven, passed another décharge named *La Prairie*, at the end of which we encamped.

The banks of this river are generally high, rocky, and thickly wooded with pine, ash, beech, and poplar. The stream itself is narrow, and, except where it is interrupted by cascades or rapids, the current moves on very sluggishly. The reflection of the dark foliage of the trees gives the place a gloomy appearance, which is unenlivened by the sight of game, or the warbling of a single bird.

September 6th. Remained until half past six repairing the canoes, after which we embarked.

At nine arrived at a pretty high fall, called the Portage des Paresseux, the view from which is highly picturesque. At half past ten, passed a small décharge, called Les Epingles, and at noon made the Décharge des Grosses Roches. At two, passed the Décharge du Campion; at three, the Décharge des Roses; and at seven, the Portage du Plein Champ, at the end of which we encamped. The river this day appeared a little wider, but the general aspect of the country did not differ from that described yesterday.

September 7th. Embarked at six A. M.; passed a few rapids, and at seven arrived at the termination of the river where it falls into the Ottawa, called by the Canadians La Grande Rivière. Remained here the rest of the day, for the loaded canoes behind. A range of high hills are visible on the north side of the Ottawa, which extend down to the Labrador coast.

September 8th. Mr. Fletcher took the sun's altitude at noon, and determined this place to be in latitude $46^{\circ} 19'$ N. exactly the same as the mouth of the Columbia; and the longitude about 80° West. Did not embark until four P. M.

Passed two rapids, in one of which we partly unloaded, and encamped at five to wait for the canoes. The banks of the Ottawa, as far as we have proceeded, are high, the soil gravelly, and the wood principally pine and birch. Had very fine weather all day.

September 9th. Set off at half past five A. M. Unloaded part of our packages at Les Batteries de Matawan and L'Eveillé; and took out all our loading at the Trou and Les Deux Rivières, at the foot of which latter place we encamped. These are all large rapids, and the two latter are dangerous. During the day we passed some very fine low bottoms, admirably adapted for building on, and completely sheltered by the hills in their rear. Wood and soil same as yesterday, and the current of the river generally rapid.

September 10th. It rained hard all night. Remained until eight A. M., repairing the canoes. At half past ten arrived at the great rapid called Le Rocher Capitaine, at which we were obliged to unload, and carry the goods by a long portage. Encamped, at five, at a handsome spot called the Pointe aux Chênes, from the great quantity of oak

trees growing on it. It is one of the prettiest situations I have ever seen for a village.

September 11th. Embarked at five A. M., in a thick fog. At seven arrived at a dangerous rapid called the Joachim, at which we were obliged to unload and carry the canoes and packs over a very bad portage, which we finished at half past eight. About an hour after came to another equally dangerous rapid called the Second Joachim, where we also unloaded, and finished the portage at a quarter past eleven. Here we breakfasted, and stopped to gum and repair the canoes. We walked between the two portages, and passed a small inland lake about a furlong in breadth. Continued on at one P. M., and had no farther obstructions in the river during the day. Encamped at seven in a pretty little bay. The banks of the Ottawa this day appeared to be well supplied with excellent pine, birch, and other trees. The oak had a dwarfish appearance, and very little underwood was visible; a circumstance which must materially facilitate the location of new settlers.

September 12th. Embarked at half past two

A. M. At seven passed a rapid called the Culbute, at which we partly unloaded. Within a few minutes of nine passed another, called Les Allumettes, where also we were obliged to carry part of our lading. At two P. M. arrived at a trading-post called Fort Coulonge, in charge of a worthy substantial old soul, called, from his age and weight, Alderman Godin. He gave us a repast of the best he had, which was no great things; but as he was unable to supply us with any provisions for the use of the men, we took our leave of him at sun-set, and drove down the current all night, which, being free from rapids, exposed us to no great danger. The poor *voyageurs*, who were in a starving condition, kept up *les chansons à l'aviron* until day-break, to divert their hunger.

September 13th. At six A. M. arrived at the rapid of the Grand Calumet, where we had to make a portage of our canoes and baggage, which was not completed until a quarter past eleven. This portage is very long, but the pathway is excellent. At twelve passed a rapid called Tergir, at which we partly unloaded; and in less than an hour afterwards came to the Portage de la Montagne,

which we finished at half past one. Road excellent. Some time after we shot down a very dangerous rapid called Du Sable, without unloading. Our canoes touched the rocks several times, and sustained considerable injury. At half past four made Portage du Fort, rather short; and at six encamped at the entrance of Lac des Chats. We walked several miles on each bank during the day, and observed the predominant timber to be stately pine, and very fine cedar.

September 14th. The Ottawa here forms a lake, which the Canadians, as I have already mentioned, called Lac des Chats, but why I could not learn. The shores of the lake are rather low, and the trees much smaller than those higher up. We embarked at four A. M., and crossed the lake at half past ten; after which we entered a number of dangerous and intricate channels formed by several rocky islands, through which we had the greatest difficulty in passing, from a combination of rocks, snags, &c. On extricating ourselves from this labyrinth, we arrived at Portage des Chats, which we passed at noon. At the end of this portage we found a Mr. Hodgeson settled, who had for-

merly been a clerk in the service of the Hudson's-Bay Company. The only refreshment he could afford to our half-starved men, was a meal of potatoes and butter. Finding nothing very attractive about this solitary settlement, we lost no time in resuming our journey.

Encountered no other rapids during the day, and at nine P. M. arrived at the house of an American back-woodsman, who with his family had retired to rest. It was a miserable smoky dwelling, and it was no easy task to rouse them from a loft in which their dormitory was situated. The master of the family at length made his appearance, which was highly unprepossessing. On his head he wore an old bear-skin cap, and over his shoulders was thrown a kind of half-worn deer-skin covering. He was upwards of six feet in height, with square shoulders, piercing grey eyes, large bushy whiskers, a smoke-dried countenance, and a beard which for months had not felt a razor.

The salutation of this uncouth savage gave us no favourable idea of his hospitality. On opening the door he roared out in a sharp nasal accent, "D—n and b—t ye, what do ye want? Why do ye

make sich a d——n noise at this hour of the night, ye d——d French rascals?"

"We are hungry, and want something to eat."

"I have none to give,—so be off."

"But we will pay you for it in hard dollars."*

"B—t me if I care.—I have nothing,—so don't trouble me any more."

The Canadians however having assured us that he was generally well supplied with provisions, we told him we should forthwith institute a search, and take by force that which he refused for money. This threat induced the boor to dislodge from a large cupboard, some cold meat, dried fish, and Indian corn, which with a mess of potatoes served to blunt the keen edge of our appetite for the night.

September 15th. Started at day-break. At half past seven passed a large log-house occupied by several Americans, from whom the men obtained corn and fish enough for a meal. At half past nine arrived at Portage des Chênes, where

* McNeill, Wentzel and I obtained, a couple of days before, sixty dollars from Mr. Fletcher, who had gone on ahead for Montreal.

we obtained an excellent breakfast at two shillings ahead in the house of Mr. M'Collum, a native of Prince Edward's Island, from which place he had lately removed to the banks of the Ottawa, where he set up a small tavern, the first I had seen for six years.

A short distance below this portage the navigation is interrupted by the great falls of La Chaudière, at which the village of Hull is situated. We walked thither from M'Collum's. This settlement appeared to be in a thriving condition, and, under the superintendence of its enterprising proprietor Mr. Wright, bids fair to be a place of considerable importance. We observed a few comfortable houses; and his shop, the only one in the village of any respectability, was tastefully ornamented by a handsome steeple. No provisions could be obtained for love or money, and, with the exception of some bad rum, our men could procure no refreshment of any description. The crops promised to be very abundant, but a premature frost had in a great degree injured them. The potatoes were very large, but quite moist, which, some of the inhabitants told me, is their general character-

istic both on the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Ottawa. The soil near the shore is rocky and barren, but a short distance in the interior it is rich and highly productive. Rafting is the principal business of the settlers; and white oak, red and white pine, the chief timber sent downwards. Notwithstanding the immense distance these rafts have to descend, and the number of hands employed in hewing the timber, the business is tolerably profitable.

Twenty-two families of emigrants, chiefly Irish and Scotch, had reached Hull a short time previous to our arrival. They were stationed in a range of small miserable huts, and appeared to be in a state of great destitution. The portion of land which each expected had not been yet allocated, and the poor creatures complained with apparent justice of the gross want of attention on the part of those whose duty it was to superintend their location. A few lodges of Indians were also here. The men assisted our *voyageurs* in carrying the packs across the portage; and their squaws, who were poor and dirty, made certain advances, which, to judge by their amatory glances, some of the

Canadians perfectly understood without any lingual explanation.

The navigation of the Ottawa, at this place, is obstructed by a line of bold, dark-looking rocks, which stretch across the river, and over which the descending torrent, after rushing with headlong fury, and forming a beautifully extended prismatic curtain, falls into a foaming cauldron, the frightful ebullition of which requires no small degree of nerve to survey with composure.

We remained this evening at Hull, and but for the hospitable attention we received from a Mr. Downes, who was in the employment of Mr. Wright, we should not have imagined ourselves within the precincts of civilisation.

September 16th. It rained hard during the morning, which delayed our departure until nine o'clock. Passed a number of poor straggling huts some distance below Hull, inhabited by some of the newly arrived settlers. At eleven p. m. passed the River Rideau, which falls into the Ottawa over a high perpendicular rock, and forms a beautiful and picturesque cascade. This river, I understand, runs through a fruitful district,

which is thickly settled, chiefly by Scotch emigrants. A few miles lower down passed another stream called La Rivière Blanche, near the mouth of which there is a thriving village. During the day we observed several farms thinly scattered along the banks, the occupants of which were very reluctant in parting with any of their provisions. Had a smooth steady current all day, uninterrupted by rapids. The appearance of the country was low, and tolerably well wooded; but the Canadians say that, in high water, some of the flat bottoms are inundated. At nine P. M. put ashore at a farm-house, where we procured a little addition to our scanty supply for supper. As the weather was fine, and the navigation free from danger, we re-embarked at eleven P. M., and drove gently down the current all night.

September 17th. At half past eight A. M. we arrived at the great rapid called Le Long Sault, the navigation of which is so dangerous, that guides reside at the place for the special purpose of conducting the canoes through it. While we were waiting for our pilot, we asked one of the *habitans* where we could obtain a good breakfast?

He pointed to a handsome house on an eminence above the rapid, and merely said "*là !*" A few seconds brought us to the door, which was opened by a ruddy blue-eyed damsel, who conducted us to the parlour. We told her we wished to see her master or mistress immediately, upon which she courted obedience and withdrew.

From the windows of this apartment we had an extensive and picturesque view of hills, forests, corn-fields, farm-houses, and gardens ; while close to the foot of the hill the majestic Ottawa rolled its turbulent waters over a mass of large detached rocks upwards of two miles in extent. The parlour itself was the *beau idéal* of elegance and comfort. The breakfast-table was partly laid, and a polished copper tea-kettle simpered most harmoniously on a bright brass footman, which was suspended from the shining bars of a Rumford grate.

While we were indulging by anticipation in the pleasures of a substantial *déjeûné*, the door opened, and a female *en déshabille*, of prepossessing appearance, entered. A large bunch of keys in her hand announced her domestic supremacy. She saluted us in the most cordial and friendly manner,

and begged to know if we had come from the interior? Having replied in the affirmative, she added—

“You are Nor-Westerners I presume, gentlemen?”

“Yes, Madam,” said Wentzel, “and have been travelling all night in search of a breakfast, which one of the *habitants* told us we could get here.”—

“You shall have the best the house affords,” was the reply.

“Hot rolls?”—“Yes.”

“Fresh eggs?”—“Most decidedly.”

“A broiled chop?”—“I’ll try.”

“And do you hear me, landlady,” said M’Neill, as she was quitting the room, “This is a sharp morning,—could we get a whet out of Boniface’s own bottle?” To this a favourable answer was also returned, and away she flew to comply with our various requisitions.

In a few minutes Marguerite made her appearance, carrying a large tray furnished with the hot rolls, fresh eggs, broiled chops, and the *whet*. She was followed by her mistress, who was accompanied by a middle-aged gentleman in his dressing-gown.

"You are welcome, gentlemen," said he; "Ha! my dear Wentzel, is this you? I'm delighted to see you. How did you find me out?"

"Find you out," replied Wentzel, "Why, my dear Grant, can this be your house?" "Certainly," said he; "and permit me to introduce you, gentlemen, to Mrs. Grant."

We all began to stammer out excuses for our apparent rudeness, and explained the trick which the Tony Lumpkin of the village had played on us. Mrs. Grant laughed heartily at our confusion, and graciously sealed our pardon by pledging us in a flowing bowl of refreshing Hyson.

Mr. Grant had been formerly a member of the North-West Company, and while in the Indian country had been associated with Wentzel in many hazardous excursions. In short, they were old friends, and were naturally overjoyed at their unexpected meeting, the pleasure of which was much heightened by the ludicrous mistake that led to it. At 11 o'clock, we took leave of our worthy host and his amiable lady; and in less than two hours arrived at the foot of Le Long Sault, which is one of the longest and most dangerous

rapids in the interior. Here we met another retired partner of the North-West Company, Mr. John M'Donald, who insisted on our visiting his house. An excellent dinner was quickly prepared, during the demolition of which we cracked half a dozen of Mr. Mac's prime Madeira. This gentleman was a strict Roman Catholic, and, during his residence in the Indian country, was distinguished by the Canadians from others of the same name by the title of *Le Prêtre* (Priest), owing to the rigid manner in which he made his men adhere to the various fasts of the Catholic church; a proof of orthodoxy with which the great majority of them would have gladly dispensed. From this circumstance, joined to his general character among the *voyageurs*, I was led to expect in Mr. M'Donald a second St. Francis; but in lieu of the austere monk, we saw in the retired trader a cheerful, healthy, and contented old man—a proof, if any were wanting, that true piety and social gaiety are not incompatible.

At five P. M. we took our leave of the hospitable *Prêtre*, who anxiously pressed us to spend the night at his house; an invitation which our ar-

rangements precluded us from accepting. Passed several handsome farms during the evening; and after night-fall had set in, we arrived at the entrance of Rivière à la Graisse, on the banks of which a long straggling village is situated. Having seen the men properly accommodated, we left them at the mouth of the river, and proceeded towards the village, in which, after some inquiry, I found an old Columbian friend, named Donald M'Gillis, comfortably settled. He quickly collected a few rustic *bon vivans* to greet our arrival, and the night was far advanced in festive mirth before our good-natured host permitted us to throw our jaded bodies on a bed.

Sept. 18th. We did not rise till ten this morning, at which time some of the men insisted on awakening us. They told us that two of the loaded, canoes which stopped to repair below the *Sault* the evening before, had not yet arrived. We therefore told them to wait a couple of hours longer, at the expiration of which, if they did not arrive, we should proceed. Took a late breakfast, shortly after which we bade farewell to my friend M'Gillis, who accompanied us to the beach. Seeing

no appearance of the two canoes, we ordered our men to make little use of the paddles; and as the day was remarkably fine, after descending a few miles, Wentzel, M'Neill, and I landed, and proceeded seven or eight miles on a good road running parallel with the river, until we arrived at an excellent tavern kept by a curious and eccentric person named Snyder, a German by birth, at which place we determined to pass the night. We therefore sent orders to the canoes to encamp before the tavern; and, having inquired what we could obtain for dinner, were presented with a bill of fare that would not have derogated from the credit of the first inn in England. It was not, however, like many of those documents—all show and no substance: the German put nothing on paper, that he was not prepared to put on the table; and in less than an hour after our orders were given, the dinner was served up in a style of neatness and even elegance which I have seldom seen surpassed in any house of public entertainment.

After dinner we invited the old man to join us. He was a most entertaining companion. Fame

had celebrated him as a first-rate narrator of anecdotes, and the report we found was not exaggerated. His conversation was a complete antidote to *ennui*, and effectually checked any propensities we might have had to sleep. The North-Westerns, he said, were the founders of his fortune: they always stopped at his house in their journeys to and from the interior, and, no matter how other customers might fare, a North-Western should always have the best bed and bottle in his house. He kept his word,—but we could not keep our beds. Five months continued sleeping on the hard ground had so vitiated our taste for comfort, that we in vain endeavoured to compose ourselves to rest; and, after suffering the torments of luxury for a couple of hours, were obliged to order the beds to be removed, after which we slept tolerably well on the mattresses.

September 19th. Partook of an early breakfast with the worthy old Rhinelander, immediately after which we embarked. Some distance below Snyder's we entered the Lake of the Two Mountains, which is formed by the extension of the

Ottawa. Stopped at a village on the western shore of the lake, from which it derives its name. The principal inhabitants of this place are Iroquois Indians, a small remnant of that once powerful tribe. They are all Roman Catholics, and have a plain neat church. Here I also found another old friend from the Columbia, Mr. Pillet, with whom we stopped a couple of hours. He had a snug farm, a comfortable house, a handsome wife, and two pretty children, and altogether appeared to be in happy circumstances.

The two canoes which had been so long in the rear overtook us here, and we continued on together the remainder of the day. On passing the village of St. Anne's we were hailed by Mr. Daniel M'Kenzie, one of the senior proprietors of the North-West Company, for whom I had some letters. We therefore put ashore, and found with him Messrs. Cameron and Sayers, against whom certain charges had been preferred by some members of the Hudson's-Bay Company, relative to the outrages in the interior, the result of which it was deemed prudent they should abide at this retired village. Remained a few hours with those

gentlemen, with whom we took a luncheon ; after which we resumed our voyage.

The country from Rivière à la Grasse to Snyder's, and from thence to St. Anne's, is highly cultivated, well stocked with farms and thriving villages, and is rich in scenery of the most beautiful and romantic description.

At four p. m. arrived at the termination of the Ottawa, where it forms a junction with the Great St. Lawrence, down which we continued until six, when we arrived at the village of La Chine, at which place canoe-voyaging terminates with the parties homeward-bound, and commences with those destined for the interior.

After some delay we procured a *calèche* sufficiently large to hold Wentzel, M'Neill, and myself. We next purchased, at a neighbouring *auberge*, a keg of rum, which we presented as a valedictory allowance to our *voyageurs*, and, having shook each man cordially by the hand, drove off amidst their benedictions, for Montreal, in which city we arrived at half past nine p. m., at Clamp's Coffee-House in Capital Street, after a journey of five months and three days from the Pacific Ocean.

CHAPTER XV.

Sketches of the Canadian Voyageurs—Anecdote of La Liberté
—The Freeman, or Trappers—The Half-breeds—Anecdote
—Retired Partners—Josephine—Française—Amusing Letter—
Iroquois Indians—Anecdote.

THERE are three descriptions of men in the Company's employment, namely:—the white Canadians, the Half-breeds, and the Iroquois Indians. A few words respecting each class may not be uninteresting to the general reader. The first are the descendants of the original French settlers. They are generally engaged for five years; and, at the period I speak of, the foreman and steersman of each canoe received one thousand livres per annum, the middlemen six hundred, with an equipment, which means a suit of clothes and a

large carot of tobacco annually. The number of men in each canoe varies, according to its size, from six to ten. The strongest and most expert are employed in the bow and stern; for upon their skilful management in conducting the vessel through the dangerous rapids, the safety of the crew chiefly depends. Their rations at first view may appear enormous. Each man is allowed eight pounds of solid meat per diem, such as buffalo, deer, horse, &c., and ten pounds if there be bone in it. In the autumnal months, in lieu of meat, each man receives two large geese, or four ducks. They are supplied with fish in the same proportion. It must, however, be recollected that these rations are unaccompanied by bread, biscuit, potatoes, or, in fact, by vegetables of any description. In some of our journeys up the Columbia they were allowed pork and rice; and on particular occasions, such as wet weather, or making a long portage, they received a glass of rum.

At Christmas and New-year they are served out with flour to make cakes or puddings, and each man receives half a pint of rum. This they call a *regale*, and they are particularly grateful for it,

With no rent to pay, or provisions to purchase, it may be thought these men save the greater part of their wages. Such, however, is not the fact. There is not perhaps in the world a more thoughtless or improvident race of people than the Canadian *voyageurs*. Every article of extra clothing or finery which they want must be obtained from the Company's stores; and as there is no second shop at which to apply, prices immeasurably beyond the value are charged for the various articles they purchase. In this manner, between the expenses attending their Indian wives, and children, the purchasing of horses, gambling, &c., the wages of years are dissipated.

I know of no people capable of enduring so much hard labour as the Canadians, or so submissive to superiors. In voyages of six months' duration, during which

“ Sunday shines, no Sabbath-day to them,”

they commence at day-break, and from thence to night-fall hard paddling and carrying goods occupy their time without intermission. They are remarkably good-natured and affectionate to each

other, and it is no uncommon thing to hear one man address his comrade as "*mon frère*," or "*mon cousin*," without any degree of consanguinity existing between them. The enlivening anecdote, or *la chanson à l'aviron*, by turns softens down the severity of their laborious duties, in the midst of which they uniformly display the same elasticity of spirits and *gaieté de cœur* by which their vivacious French ancestors were so much distinguished. It is laughable to hear the nominal distinctions they are obliged to adopt in reference to many of the partners and clerks, who have the same surname. There are Mr. Mackenzie, *le rouge*; Mr. Mackenzie, *le blanc*; Mr. Mackenzie, *le borgne*; Mr. Mackenzie, *le picoté*; Mr. M'Donald, *le grand*; Mr. M'Donald, *le prêtre*; Mr. M'Donald, *le bras croche*; and so on, according to the colour of the hair, the size, or other personal peculiarity of each individual.

Mr. Shaw, one of the agents, had passed many years in the interior, and was by the *voyageurs* called *Monsieur Le Chat*. On quitting the Indian country he married a Canadian lady, by whom he had several children. Some years after this event,

one of his old foremen, named Louis La Liberté, went to Montreal to spend the winter. He had heard of his old *bourgeois*' marriage, and was anxious to see him. Mr. Shaw was walking on the Champ de Mars with a couple of officers, when La Liberté spied him. He immediately ran up, and seizing him by both hands, began as follows :—" *Ah, mon cher Monsieur le Chat, comment vous portez-vous?*" "*Très bien, Louison.*" "*Et comment se porte Madame la Chatte?*" "*Bien, bien; Louison, elle est très bien.*"—" *Et tous les petits Chatons?*" This was too much for Mr. Shaw, who answered shortly that *kittens* and all were well, and; telling him to call at his house, turned away with his military friends, leaving the *Catechetical Louison* quite astonished at the abruptness of his departure.

La Liberté was an extraordinary old man; he had several fine daughters by an Indian wife, and became father-in-law to three proprietors. He was therefore proud of his connexions, and, feeling indignant at Mr. Shaw's supposed cavalier treatment, adopted an eccentric method of manifesting his resentment. He ordered a coat to be made of fine green cloth, with silver buttons, a

waistcoat of crimson velvet, back and front, (like the sailor at Portsmouth,) with cornelian buttons, braided sky-blue pantaloons, Hessian boots with gold tassels and *silver heels*, a hat, feathers, and silk sash; and thus accoutred, with a long calumet in his right hand, and a splendidly ornamented smoking-bag in his left, he proceeded to the Champ de Mars, during a regimental parade, and observing Mr. Shaw, walking in company with some ladies and gentlemen, he vociferated, “*Ha ha, Monsieur le Chat, voyez ma veste, voilà les boutons! En avez-vous de même? Ha, ha, Monsieur le Chat, regardez mes bottes—je suis ferré d’argent. Je suis le beau-père de Monsieur M^r Dinnill;—Monsieur Mackenzie est mon gendre; et je me sacre de tous les Chats, et de toutes les Chattes!*” Some of his friends, who previous to his leaving home observed him drinking a quantity of rum, followed him to the parade ground, and with much difficulty at length succeeded in forcing him away, while the poor old man every now and then lifted up a leg, and dared any Shaw, or officer on the ground, to show silver heels to his boots!

The dress of a *voyageur* generally consists of a

capot made out of a blanket, with leather or cloth trousers, mocassins, a striped cotton shirt, and a hat or fur cap. They seldom annoy themselves with a waistcoat; and in the summer season their necks are generally exposed. They all wear belts of variegated worsted, from which their knives, smoking-bags, &c. are suspended. They enjoy good health, and, with the exception of occasional attacks of rheumatism, are seldom afflicted with disease. The principal trading establishments are supplied with well-assorted medicine-chests containing books of directions, lancets, &c. An assortment of the more simple medicines is made up for each out-post; and as each clerk must learn how to bleed, we generally manage, between low diet, salts, castor-oil, opodeldoc, friar's-balsam and phlebotomy, to preserve their health unimpaired, and cure any common accident which may befall them.

The Canadians are not much inclined to Indian warfare. This, however, does not proceed from any want of courage; for in the late short war with the United States they conducted themselves with eminent bravery. A local corps, composed of

the officers and men of the North-West Company, was raised by the Honourable William M'Gillivray. His son Mr. Joseph M'Gillivray, as I have mentioned elsewhere, was an officer in it; and he gave us some laughable details relative to the conduct of the privates in the campaign in which he was engaged. When on duty in company with the regular forces or the militia they were guilty of much insubordination, and it was quite impossible to make them amenable to military law. They generally came on parade with a pipe in their mouths and their rations of pork and bread stuck on their bayonets. On seeing an officer, whether general, colonel, or subaltern, they took off their hats and made a low bow, with the common salutation of *Bon jour, Monsieur le Général, or le Colonel*, as the case might be, and, if they happened to know that the officer was married, never failed to inquire after the health of *Madame et les enfans*. On parade they talked incessantly, called each other 'pork eaters,' quarrelled about their rations, wished they were back in the Indian country again, &c., and when called to order by their officers and told to hold their

tongues, one or more would reply, "Ah, dear captain, let us off as quick as you can; some of us have not yet breakfasted, and it's upwards of an hour since I had a smoke." If the officer was a North-Wester he generally told them to have patience, and he would give them their *congé tout de suite*. In moments when danger ought to have produced a little steadiness, they completely set discipline at defiance, and the volatile volunteer broke out into all the unrestrained mirth and anti-military familiarity of the thoughtless *voyageur*. In vain the subaltern winked, in vain the captain threatened, in vain the colonel frowned; neither winks, threats or frowns could restrain the vivacious laugh, silence the noisy tongue, or compose the ever changing features into any thing like military seriousness.

These repeated infractions of the *code militaire* subjected many of them to temporary confinement; but as night approached, if the sentinel was a *voyageur*, he told the prisoner to "*aller coucher avec sa femme, et retourner le lendemain de bonne heure*." This friendly advice was immediately followed, and they had always the honour

to return according to promise. They could not be got to wear stocks ; and such as did not use cravats came on parade with naked necks, and very often with rough beards. In this condition they presented a curious contrast to the unchangeable countenances and well-drilled movements of the British soldiery, with whom they occasionally did duty. Notwithstanding these peculiarities the *voyageurs* were excellent partisans, and, from their superior knowledge of the country, were able to render material service during the war. They had great confidence in their officers, particularly their colonel, Mr. M'Gillivray, whose influence frequently saved them from the punishment to which their repeated breaches of discipline subjected them.

There are scattered throughout the North-West territories a few dozen Canadian trappers called free-men. These individuals were formerly engaged as *voyageurs* in the Company's service, and preferred, after the termination of their respective engagements, to remain in the Indian country rather than return to Canada. They have generally Indian families, and from their peculiar occupation lead a wandering life.

They must bring the produce of their hunts to the Company's posts, when they receive payment in goods according to a regulated tariff, or the value in money is placed to their credit, and paid on their arrival in Montreal. From their constant exposure to the sun, these men are as irretrievably bronzed as the native Indians, from whom, owing to their long separation from their countrymen, they differ but little either in their habits or modes of living. Some of them have large bands of horses; and, I understand, a plurality of wives is not unfrequent among them!

THE HALF-BREEDS.

This race is now numerous throughout the Indian country; particularly on the east side of the Rocky Mountains. Owing to the recent arrival of white people at the Columbia, they are comparatively few on the western side. The sons of the *voyageurs*, on attaining a proper age, are generally engaged in the Company's service. They are called Les Bois Brulés—but why, it is difficult to ascertain. While they are taught to despise the traditions of their mothers' tribe, no one busies

himself in unfolding to them the divine truths of Christianity, and the loose manners of their fathers are but ill calculated to impress them with any great respect for the ties of morality. It is therefore not surprising, that when precept is silent, and parental example vicious, they should exhibit conduct at variance with the relations of civilised life. They are fond of ardent spirits, and are much addicted to swearing : while the abominable custom of Indian mothers in talking in the most undisguised manner before their children of sexual intercourse, creates a grossness of ideas with regard to female purity, which may account in a great degree for their carelessness on that head.

They are good canoe-men, and excellent hunters, remarkably active either on horseback or on foot ; brave, daring, rather passionate, and, while they possess all the vivacity of their father, they at times manifest a slight symptom of Indian ferocity ; this however is only evinced when any insulting allusion is made to their mixed origin. They are open-hearted and generous, practise little cunning, detest hypocrisy ; and while they are determined not to submit quietly to a wrong,

are extremely cautious against giving any unnecessary cause of offence.

The proprietors generally send their sons to Canada or England for education. They have a wonderful aptitude for learning, and in a short time attain a facility in writing and speaking both French and English that is quite astonishing. Their manners are naturally and unaffectedly polite, and their conversation displays a degree of pure, easy, yet impassioned eloquence, seldom heard in the most refined societies.

On finishing their studies those intended for the Company's service enter as apprentice-clerks; and in course of time, according to their talents and seniority, become proprietors.

The Half-breed women are excellent wives and mothers, and instances of improper conduct are rare among them. They are very expert at the needle, and make coats, trowsers, vests, gowns, shirts, shoes, &c., in a manner that would astonish our English fashioners. They are kept in great subjection by their respective lords, to whom they are slavishly submissive. They are not allowed to sit at the same table, or indeed at

any table, for they still continue the savage fashion of squatting on the ground at their meals, at which their fingers supply the place of forks. They wear no caps in the house ; but in travelling hats are used instead of bonnets. With the exception of the head their dress resembles that worn by the Bavarian broom-girls, who of late years visit our shores.

A gentleman whose name frequently occurs in these pages, but which it is here unnecessary to repeat, had, a few years after his arrival in the Indian country, taken a half-breed girl as a partner. She was the daughter of a Canadian by a Cree mother, and was very young, handsome, and possessed such amiable and engaging manners that he determined to bring her with him on his first visit to Canada, and legalize their union by the seal of marriage. She had made some progress in reading, and had two fine boys whom he sent to Scotland for their education. In short, no man was more happy than young ———, no woman was judged more perfect than his interesting wife. He was obliged one year to conduct a brigade of loaded canoes from his wintering-post

to Fort William, and during his absence, which occupied about four months, left his wife behind him.

He returned sooner than was expected, and, leaving the canoes some distance below the fort, arrived there about midnight. The dogs knew his signal, and he proceeded without any noise or obstruction to his bed-room, in which he found his guilty partner in the arms of another. He instantly drew his dagger, with which he nearly destroyed the paramour, while she fled to one of the married men's apartments, in which she remained concealed during the night. Next morning, when his passion had cooled, he sent for her, and addressed her feelingly on her base and ungrateful conduct. He declared he could not think of living again with her; that he should send her to her father, (who was a free trapper,) and give her all her clothes, trinkets, &c.; and, should her future life prove correct, promised that her usual supply of clothes and provisions should be regularly furnished her. She retired weeping, and deeply affected. Her misconduct preyed heavily on her mind; and in less than four months

after joining her father, she was numbered with the dead. Her seducer quitted the Company's service, and Mr. ——— never after took a wife. Instances of this nature are however of rare occurrence among the Half-breed women; and taking their numbers and want of education into consideration, perhaps fewer cases of infidelity occur among them than among any equal portion of females in the civilised world.

When a young trader becomes united to an Indian or half-breed woman he seldom calculates on a family, and foolishly imagines he can easily dissolve a connexion which is unsanctioned by the ceremony of marriage. He is however much deceived. When the period which he had originally fixed for quitting the Indian country arrives, he finds that the woman who had been for many years a faithful partner cannot in a moment be "whistled off," and "let down the wind to prey at fortune." Children have grown up about him; the natural affection of the father despises the laws of civilised society,—the patriot sinks in the parent,—each succeeding year weakens the recollection of home, and of—

The pleasant fields, travelled so oft

In life's morning march, when his bosom was young ;

and in most cases the temporary *liaison* ends in a permanent union. Those so circumstanced, on quitting the Company bring their families to Canada, where they purchase estates, on which they live in a kind of half Indian, half civilised manner, constantly smoking their calumet and railing at the fashionable frivolities of the great world.

When a trader wishes to separate from his Indian wife he generally allows her an annuity, or gets her comfortably married to one of the *voyageurs*, who, for a handsome sum, is happy to become the husband of *la Dame d'un Bourgeois*. A retired partner, thus disembarrassed, arrives in Canada determined to enjoy the pleasures of matrimony with an educated female. His arrival is quickly known,—his object buzzed about. The ladies of Montreal and Quebec are immediately on the *qui vive* ; invitations are numerous, the wealthy North-Wester is universally admired ; bronzed features, Oxford-grey hairs, and a *dégagé tout ensemble* impart peculiar interest to his appearance. When he speaks, every tongue is silent ;

Each moving accident by flood and field

is listened to with breathless attention, and many a fair auditor unconsciously wishes that

Heaven had made her such a man.

Music follows, then a song; dancing succeeds; and he retires bewildered in joy, and cursing the fortune that so long debarred him from the enjoyment of such happiness. His selection is quickly made, and he at length becomes a legal Benedict.

I believe such unions are generally happy; but the censorious, particularly those who remain faithful to their Indian wives, assert that many of their old associates have been sadly duped in their matrimonial speculations.

These envious scandal-mongers alledge that the unfortunate husband too quickly discovers that a bright eye, a fair face, a sweet voice, or a tune on the piano is rather an empty compensation for the waste of a hard-earned fortune; while, if he attempts to remonstrate against his wife's extravagance, his interesting bronze is compared to copper, the Oxford-grey assumes a whiter hue, the *air dégagé* degenerates to the air slovenly;

and an English tongue, quite at variance with his ideas of conjugal submission, reminds him that when all the officers in the garrison were dying for her, she was thrown away upon a weather-beaten, rheumatic, dog-eating, moss-chewing barbarian, whose habits were better adapted to the savage society of Indian squaws, than to that of ladies of education. The latter gentlemen, however, retaliate on the former by alledging that all their ill-natured reports are caused by the refusal of the white ladies to visit or associate with those brought down from the interior, whom they regard as little better than savages. There may be some truth on each side; but on which it preponderates I am unable to determine.

Very few men wish to have any offspring by their Indian wives; a sterile woman is therefore invaluable. They are however scarce, and happy is the man who succeeds in obtaining one.

One of the clerks on the Columbia, Mr. J——, was particularly cautioned by his father, who was an old proprietor, against taking an Indian wife, lest he should be burdened with children during his clerkship. The son promised obedience; but being stationed at Kamloops, he learned that an

Indian recently drowned had been married five years, during which period his wife never had a child. This was a prize not to be lost ; and as he knew the parental prohibition was more levelled against children than a wife, he lost no time in proposing for the young widow. His offers were liberal, and were gladly accepted by her relations. From a fancied resemblance to a late celebrated empress he called her *Josephine*. The resemblance however was imperfect, for nine months had scarcely elapsed when *his* Josephine brought forth a thumping swarthy pet. He was in despair—immediately dissolved the connexion, gave the boy to one of the men's wives to nurse, and sent home the mother with a plentiful stock of clothes and presents, which quickly obtained her another husband.

Mr. J—— was transferred that autumn from the Columbia to the Athabasca department, to replace a Mr. C—— who was about quitting the country, and leaving behind him a handsome Half-breed wife. J—— succeeded him both in bed and board, with what results will appear from the following extract of a letter which I subsequently received from him :

“ You are aware of the cause which obliged me to repudiate my Columbian wife, Josephine. Another great man repudiated his Josephine for the opposite cause; but, *n'importe*, I divorced myself, and resolved thenceforth never to run the risk of having another child in the *pays sauvage*. On my arrival here I found my friend C—— on the point of quitting Athabasca, and bidding adieu to his wife, *la belle Française*, one of the finest women in the department. Her history is rather *hors du commun*. Her father was a Canadian guide, and at the age of fourteen gave her in marriage to an interpreter with whom she lived three years without children, when she became a widow in consequence of her husband having been killed by some of the Blood Indians. Mr. C—— shortly after became her husband, and brought her to Athabasca, where she lived with him eight years *sans enfans*.

“ She had lived eleven years, with two husbands, and her character therefore was firmly established. She was besides a fine woman, good tempered, and remarkably ingenious. I therefore determined to secure such a prize, and made my pro-

posals in due form. She was her own mistress; and, happy at catching such a respectable successor to her late lord, she at once consented to become mine.

“Ere a few months passed, symptoms of a most suspicious nature began to appear; but I could not imagine my Française would turn mother; it might be dropsy—any thing in fact but pregnancy—but “list, oh list.” On the 1st of April we became *one*, (the day was ominous,) and on that day nine months precisely (it is a melancholy coincidence of dates) she presented me with a New-Year’s gift in the shape of a man-child! But the cup of my misfortunes is not yet full. Owing to some mamillary malformation, she was unable to supply the *brass* bantling with milk, which obliged me to give it to nurse to one of the men’s wives. Apprehensive of having another, I resolved on a separation, but I knew not how to break my intention to her. The new-born delight of a mother seemed to absorb all her faculties. The child is continually in her hands, she says he’s my picture, and, to do the little racial justice, I think there is a likeness; but to my

story :—while I was deliberating as to the least painful mode of conveying my resolution to her, I received a few days since the astounding intelligence of her being *encore enceinte !!* Murder ! murder ! isn't this too bad ? Still I can't blame her, knowing that I am a *particeps criminis*. But, what will the governor say ? Ay, that's the question. In two years, two copper grand-children ; three I mean, for I understand my Columbian pet is thriving apace. Why, the old gentleman will destroy me. Was ever a man so tricked ? There's the fruits of striving to cheat Nature ; but I must send him a long, explanatory, apologetical letter, introduce morality, &c. Française may now as well remain until I hear from him ; and if he interposes no objection, I do not intend to change her. I have called my last *Hector*. Adieu !”

The third description of men in the Company's service are the Iroquois, Nipisings, and others of the native tribes of Canada. These Indians have been all nearly reclaimed from their original state of barbarism, and now profess the Roman Catholic religion. They engage for limited periods in the Company's service as canoe-men and

hunters, but on lower terms than are usually allowed to the French Canadians. They are strong, able-bodied men, good hunters, and well acquainted with the management of canoes. They are immoderately attached to the use of ardent spirits; are rather quarrelsome, revengeful, and sometimes insubordinate; and during their periods of intoxication the utmost prudence and firmness are necessary to check their ferocious propensities, and confine them within proper bounds. They are generally employed on the east side of the mountains, but we had a few of them on the Columbia. One, named George Teewhattahownie, was a powerful man about six feet high. On one occasion, during our voyage to the sea, we had a stiff breeze, and George, who was foreman of my canoe, kept up a heavy press of sail. I requested him repeatedly to take in a reef, and pointed out the danger to which we were exposed in the event of an accident. He appeared to pay no attention to my request, and I was at length obliged to use peremptory and threatening language, which produced a forced and sulky obedience. A few days after our arrival at Fort

George he came into my room in a state of intoxication, and ungovernable rage, with a vessel containing rum in his left hand, and in his right his *couteau de chasse*; in short his whole appearance was wild and savage, and I at once guessed his visit was not of a friendly nature. His opening speech realised my suspicions.

“Cox, you toad, prepare for death! you abused me, and I must have my revenge.”

“You ’re not sober, George; go sleep a while, and we ’ll talk on this subject to-morrow.”

“No; you insulted me before the men, and I must have satisfaction; but as you ’re a young man, I will now only take one of your ears!”

I became a little easy on finding he had lowered his demands; but as I had an equal affection for both lugs, and as “the prejudice ran in favour of two,” I had no wish, like Jack Absolute, to affect singularity in that respect. After some further parley, and finding he was determined to try his knife on my auricular cartilages, I told him to retire, or I should be obliged to order him into confinement. “Ha! crapaud!” said he, “do you threaten Tee-whattahownie?” and at the same instant rushed

on me like a grizzly bear. I was now forced to draw my dagger in self-defence, and in parrying off his thrust gave him a severe wound across the fingers of the right hand. He dropped the knife, but instantly seized it with the left hand, and at the same time attempted to catch me, which I avoided by running under his arm, and as he turned round was compelled to give him a severe cut, which nearly laid open one side of his head. He now became quite furious, roared like a buffalo, and with the blood streaming down his face appeared more like a demon than a human being. I thought to fly, but in the attempt he seized the skirt of my coat, and I was obliged once more to give him another wound across the left hand, which obliged him to drop the knife ; a desperate struggle then followed for the dagger, which, from his great strength, he must have wrested from me, had not the noise occasioned by his bellowing and my cries for assistance brought Mr. Montour and some of the men into the room. With much difficulty they succeeded in binding him hand and foot, and lodging him in the guard-room. He tore off the dressings that were applied

to his wounds, refused every assistance, and the greater part of the night was spent in wild yells and ferocious threats against me. Nature at last became exhausted, and he fell asleep, in which state his wounds were dressed. None of them were dangerous. Between the loss of blood and a long fast he became quite cool on the following day, and when told of what had occurred he could scarcely believe it, cursed the rum as the cause, and made a solemn promise never again to drink to intoxication. At the end of a couple of days I interceded and had him liberated. He appeared most grateful, acknowledged that he deserved what he got, expressed his surprise that I did not kill him, and declared if he ever heard a man say a bad word of me for wounding him he would knock him down. I believe his regret was sincere, and from that period until the following year, when I quitted the Columbia, I never saw him in a state of inebriety.

CONCLUSION.

Coalition of the two Companies—New Caledonia—Description of the Chilcotins, Talkotins, &c.—Soil, produce, lakes, rivers, animals, climate—Peculiarities of the natives—Suicides—Cruelty to relatives—Horrible treatment of prisoners—Sanguinary quarrels—Extraordinary ceremonies attending the dead—Barbarities practised on widows, &c.—Table of population.

It will be seen from a perusal of the foregoing pages that they contain simply a detail of such events as occurred under my own observation, or were cotemporaneous with my residence in the interior. I thought it better to follow this course, than, by the introduction of new matter, to break in on the regular chronological order of the narrative. Since I left the Indian country I have maintained a correspondence with many of my old associates there, particularly Mr. Joseph M'Gillivray, from whose friendly communications

the information contained in the following pages is chiefly extracted.

It will, I have no doubt, be found highly interesting ; and his description of New Caledonia furnishes the only information we possess of a portion of the American continent respecting which we have been heretofore perfectly ignorant.

A few years subsequent to my quitting the Columbia the Company abandoned Fort George (of which I have made such frequent mention), and erected another on a larger scale in a beautiful situation at Bellevue Point on the northern shore, and about eighty miles from the entrance of the river. This point was so named by Lieutenant Broughton, who had been sent up the Columbia by Vancouver, and in honor of the latter the Company has called the new establishment "Fort Vancouver."

The long and violent opposition between the Hudson's-Bay and North-West Companies ceased in the year 1821 by their coalition. The ruinous rivalry that so long existed between them must have ultimately proved destructive to both, had not a few sensible men come forward, and by their

united exertions succeeded in forming a junction. The preliminaries were signed in London, in March 1821, and confirmed at Fort William by the wintering partners in the July following. The particulars of the treaty would be uninteresting to the general reader ; and I shall here only remark that the old North-westerners are by no means pleased with it, and loudly complain of some of its minor arrangements, &c.

NEW CALEDONIA.

This district extends from $51^{\circ} 30'$ north lat. to about 56° . Its extreme western boundary is $124^{\circ} 10'$. Its principal trading post is called Alexandria, after the celebrated traveller Sir Alexander Mackenzie. It is built on the banks of Fraser's River, in about lat. 53° N. The country in its immediate vicinity presents a beautiful and picturesque appearance. The banks of the river are rather low ; but a little distance in-land some rising grounds are visible, partially diversified by groves of fir and poplar.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, in his voyage of discovery across the continent in 1793, came to the

spot on which the fort is built, and was dissuaded by the Indians from following the course of the river to its mouth. On quitting this place he proceeded to the West Road river, from whence by an overland journey he succeeded in reaching the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

This country is full of small lakes, rivers, and marshes. It extends about ten days' march in a north and north-east direction. To the south and south-east the Atnah, or Chin Indian country extends about one hundred miles; on the east there is a chain of lakes, and the mountains bordering Thompson's River; while to the westward and north-west lie the lands of the Naskotins and Clinches.

The principal rivers are Fraser's, Quesnel's, Rough Poplar, Chilcotin, and West Road. Of these Fraser's River only is navigable. It receives the waters of Quesnel's and West Poplar rivers, which issue from small lakes to the eastward.

The lakes are numerous, and some of them tolerably large: one, two, and even three days are at times required to cross some of them. They abound in a plentiful variety of fish, such as

trout, sucker, &c.; and the natives assert that white fish is sometimes taken. These lakes are generally fed by mountain streams, and many of them spread out, and are lost in the surrounding marshes.

In visiting the Naskotin and Chin Indians our conveyance is by canoes on Fraser's River; but our journeys to Bear Lake, Kloukins, and Chilcotins, must be performed on foot.

The trading goods are now obtained from the Columbia department, to which the returns of furs are forwarded. Horses are used for conveying the goods, and the journey generally occupies six weeks. The roads are extremely bad, and in every direction we encounter numerous rivulets, small lakes, and marshes.

The soil is poor: an indifferent mould, not exceeding eight inches in depth, covers a bed of gravel and sand. All the vegetables we planted, notwithstanding the utmost care and precaution, nearly failed; and the last crop of potatoes did not yield one-fourth of the seed planted.

On the banks of the river, and in the interior, the trees consist of poplar, cypress, alder, cedar,

birch, and different species of fir, spruce, and willow. There is not the same variety of wild fruit as on the Columbia; and this year (1827) the berries generally failed. Service-berries, choke-cherries, gooseberries, strawberries, and red whortleberries are gathered; but among the Indians the service-berry is the great favourite. There are various kinds of roots, which the natives preserve and dry for periods of scarcity. There is only one kind which we can eat. It is called *Txa-chin*, has a bitter taste, but when eaten with salmon imparts an agreeable zest, and effectually destroys the disagreeable smell of that fish when smoke-dried. St. John's wort is very common, and has been successfully applied as a fomentation in topical inflammations. A kind of weed, which the natives convert into a species of flax, is in general demand. An evergreen similar to that we found at the mouth of the Columbia, (and before described,) with small berries growing in clusters like grapes, also flourishes in this district. Sarsaparilla and bear-root are found in abundance. A strong decoction of the two latter with the berries last mentioned has been repeatedly

tried by our men in venereal cases, and has always proved successful.

White earth abounds in the vicinity of the fort ; and one description of it, mixed with oil and lime, might be converted into excellent soap. Coal in considerable quantities has been discovered ; and in many places we observed a species of red earth, much resembling lava, and which appeared to be of volcanic origin.

We also found in different parts of New Caledonia quartz, rock crystal, cobalt, talc, iron, marcasites of a gold colour, granite, fuller's earth, some beautiful specimens of black marble, and limestone in small quantities, which appeared to have been forced down the beds of the rivers from the mountains.

The jumping-deer, or chevreuil, together with the rein and red-deer, frequent the vicinity of the mountains in considerable numbers, and in the summer season they oftentimes descend to the banks of the rivers and the adjacent flat country.

The marmot and wood-rat also abound : the flesh of the former is exquisite, and capital robes are made out of its skin ; but the latter is a very destructive animal.

Their dogs are of diminutive size, and strongly resemble those of the Esquimaux, with the curled-up tail, small ears, and pointed nose. We purchased numbers of them for the kettle, their flesh constituting the chief article of food in our holiday feasts for Christmas and New Year.

The fur-bearing animals consist of beavers; bears, black, brown, and grizzly; otters, fishers, lynxes, martins; foxes, red, cross, and silver; minks, musquash, wolverines, and ermines. Rabbits also are so numerous that the natives manage to subsist on them during the periods that salmon is scarce.

Under the head of ornithology we have the bustard, or Canadian *outarde*, (wildgoose,) swans, ducks of various descriptions, hawks, plovers, cranes, white-headed eagles, magpies, crows, vultures, wood-thrush, red-breasted thrush, or robin, woodpeckers, gulls, pelicans, hawks, partridges, pheasants, and snow-birds.

The spring commences in April, when the wild flowers begin to bud, and from thence to the latter end of May the weather is delightful. In June it rains incessantly, with strong southerly and

easterly winds. During the months of July and August the heat is intolerable; and in September the fogs are so dense that it is quite impossible to distinguish the opposite side of the river any morning before ten o'clock. Colds and rheumatisms are prevalent among the natives during this period: nor are our people exempt from them. In October the falling of the leaves and occasional frost announce the beginning of winter. The lakes and parts of the rivers are frozen in November. The snow seldom exceeds twenty-four inches in depth. The mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer falls in January to 15° below 0; but this does not continue many days. In general, I may say, the climate is neither unhealthy nor unpleasant; and if the natives used common prudence, they would undoubtedly live to an advanced age.

The salmon fishery commences about the middle of July, and ceases in October. This is a busy period for the natives; for upon their industry in saving a sufficiency of salmon for the winter depends their chief support. Their method of catching the salmon is ingenious, and does not

differ much from that practised by the upper natives of the Columbia. A certain part of the river is enclosed by a number of stakes about twelve feet high, and extending about thirty feet from the shore. A netting of rods is attached to the stakes to prevent the salmon running through. A conical machine, called a *vorveau*, is next formed: it is eighteen feet long, and five feet high, and is made of rods about one inch and a quarter asunder, and lashed to hoops with whattap.* One end is formed like a funnel to admit the fish. Two smaller machines of nearly equal length are joined to it. It requires a number of hands to attach these *vorveaux* to the stakes. They are raised a little out of the water; and the salmon in their ascent leap into the *boot* or broad part, and fall into the enclosed space, where they are easily killed with spears. This contrivance is admirably calculated to catch fish; and when salmon is abundant, the natives take from eight to nine hundred daily.

* A tough fibrous root used in sewing bark canoes. It is split into various lengths, quite flat and flexible, and seldom exceeding one-eighth of an inch in breadth.

The salmon fishery this year (1827) completely failed, which obliged us to send to Kamloops; a post belonging to the Columbia department, for a supply. We got thence two thousand five hundred, and subsequently one thousand five hundred from Mr. Connolly, which, with some of our old stock and thirty-five kegs of potatoes, kept us from starvation.

Jub, suckers, trout, and white-fish are caught in the lakes; and in the month of October, towards the close of the salmon fishery, we catch trout of a most exquisite flavour. Large-sized sturgeon are occasionally taken in the *vorveaux*, but they are not relished by the natives.

In consequence of several of the Chilcotin tribe having represented that beaver was plentiful in their country, some of our people visited it, whose statements fully corroborated those of the Indians; and the northern council of Rupert's Land therefore determined about two years ago to establish a trading post in that quarter. A circumstance, however, shortly after occurred which has hitherto prevented the Company from carrying their intention into effect.

The Talkotins, who inhabit the banks of Fraser's River, in the vicinity of Alexandria, were formerly on the most friendly terms with the Chilcotins, and when salmon failed among the latter they were always permitted to fish in Fraser's River.

In the winter of 1826 four young men of the Talkotins proceeded on a hunting excursion to the Chilcotin lands. A quarrel, the cause of which we could never ascertain, occurred between them, and three of the young men were butchered. The fourth, who escaped dangerously wounded, arrived at the fort on the 19th March, and immediately communicated the disastrous intelligence to his countrymen. One Chilcotin, who was at the fort, would have fallen a victim to their revenge had we not interfered, and with much difficulty concealed him until an opportunity offered for his escape; which, notwithstanding the vigilance of his enemies, he effected.* A sanguinary war followed, and in some skirmishes the Talkotin chief lost three

* This poor fellow was subsequently murdered by a Talkotin.

nephews. This determined him to carry hostilities into the enemy's camp; and, having selected a chosen band of warriors, twenty-four in number, they departed on the 19th of April, and on the 20th of June returned with five prisoners, and the scalps of twelve men, women, and children, whom they had surprised and killed,

A large party of Chilcotins, who were quite ignorant of the rival chief's successful expedition, appeared on the 21st June on the banks of the river opposite the fort. They killed one stray Talkotin, but retired without coming to a general engagement. A few weeks afterwards a party, consisting of twenty-seven, made their appearance, and their chief made an oration, which, owing to a strong wind, we could not understand. They encountered some of our people who were attending the gardens on the opposite bank of the river, but did not injure them. They also retired without coming to blows. During the summer the Talkotins were constantly kept on the *qui vive* by various rumours of intended attacks; and at length, on the morning of the 24th September, a formidable party of Chilcotins, amount-

ing to eighty warriors, appeared on the banks of the river. The Talkotins were lodged in a log-house, surrounded by rows of strong palisades, with numerous loop-holes between. The battle commenced a little after day-break ; but, owing to the manner in which the latter were protected, their loss was trifling—say one man and one old woman killed ; while that of the Chilcotins amounted to six killed and many dangerously wounded. Still they pressed on, and might have been ultimately successful, had we not forwarded to the Talkotins a supply of arms and ammunition, which effectually checked their advances on the log-house. A woman of the Chilcotin tribe, who happened to be at the fort, observing the assistance we had given the enemy, stole away unperceived and communicated to her countrymen the circumstance ; on learning which, they at once determined to retreat. On their departure they denounced vengeance against us, and threatened to cut off all white men that might thereafter fall in their way.

No friendly overture has been since made by either tribe ; and although we sent word repeatedly

to the Chilcotins that we should feel happy in bringing about a reconciliation, we have not as yet received an answer, and none of them have been seen in our neighbourhood since Sept. 1826. Notwithstanding this apparent disinclination on their part to renew relations of friendship, we determined in the autumn of 1827 to establish a trading post in their country; but were prevented from doing so by the total failure of salmon.

I herewith subjoin a brief sketch of the district. The Chilcotin river takes its rise in a lake of the same name: its course from Alexandria is S.S.E.; its length, including its meanderings, about one hundred and eighty miles; and its breadth varies from forty to sixty yards: it is quite shallow, and full of rapids. The lake is about half a mile in breadth, and sixty miles in length, and is surrounded by lofty mountains, from which a number of small rivulets descend. It contains abundance of sucker, trout, and white fish. Salmon however is the favourite fish; but as it does not regularly ascend their river, they are often obliged to content themselves with the produce of the lake. They are poor hunters, otherwise they might

chiefly subsist on animal food ; for the rein-deer, with the red and moose deer, are found in great numbers in the mountains ; and in the autumnal months the black-tail and jumping-deer are plentiful. Beaver must be abundant ; for men, women, and children are clad in robes of the fur of that animal.

It is impossible to ascertain with accuracy the number of the tribe ; but I conceive the men capable of bearing arms cannot be under one hundred and eighty. They are cleanly in their persons, and remarkably hospitable.

The Chilcotins speak the Carrier language, but many of their words bear a strong affinity to the Slave Indian dialect.

They are extremely fond of iron-works, and appear to be well acquainted with the use of fire-arms. We saw one excellent gun in their possession, marked " Barret, 1808." The owner said he purchased it from Indians who came from the sea-coast. According to their accounts, travellers may in six days, from the end of Chilcotin Lake, after crossing a range of mountains, reach a river in a southerly direction which discharges its

waters into the ocean, at a place where the Indians carry on a traffic with Europeans. From their general behaviour we were led to imagine they must have had frequent intercourse with the whites ; and a peculiar kind of blanket, resembling a rug, which was in common use amongst them, we supposed had been obtained from Russian traders. The journey from Alexandria to the Chilcotin lake occupies eighteen days ; and as a proof of the richness of the country in fur-bearing animals, I have only to state that the small experimental party sent thither in December 1825 purchased from the natives between three and four hundred excellent beaver skins.

The Indians on the upper part of Fraser's River are divided into various tribes, under the following names : viz. Slowercuss, Dinais, Nascud, Dinnee, and Talkotin. They are evidently sprung from one common origin. Their manners and customs are the same ; and there is no variation in their language, which bears a close affinity to that spoken by the Chepewyans and Beaver Indians.

Several families generally club together and build a house, the size of which is proportioned

to the number of inhabitants, and is partitioned off into several divisions. The building has one long ridge pole, which in several places is uncovered, for the free egress of the smoke. They are supremely dirty and lazy, and full of vermin, which they take great pleasure in eating. They never bathe or wash their bodies, which, with the interior of their dwellings, and the surrounding neighbourhood, present a shockingly repulsive appearance of filthy nastiness, which we never observed among any other tribe. When reproached with their want of cleanliness they replied, that the dirt preserved them from the intense cold of winter, and protected them equally from the scorching sun of summer!

The women are, if possible, worse than the men; and when they wish to appear very fine they saturate their hair with salmon oil, after which it is powdered over with the down of birds, and painted with red ochre mixed with oil. Such another preparation for the head is certainly not used by any other portion of his majesty's copper-coloured subjects. While in this oleaginous state they are quite unapproachable near a fire; and

even the *voyageur*, whose sense of smelling is not over-refined, cannot bring his nasal organ into a warm apartment with one of those bedizened beauties.

It is quite common to see six or eight of the men during the summer, while their wives and children are digging roots for their subsistence, stretch their filthy covering on branches, and expose their naked bodies to the sun, changing their position as it revolves in its course.

Independently of the starvation to which their incurable indolence subjects them, it also entails on them diseases which often prove fatal to numbers ; and asthma, with rheumatic and pulmonary complaints, are quite common among them.

They are generally about the middle size, and few of them reach to the height of five feet nine inches. Their colour is a light copper, with the same long lank hair and black eyes which distinguish the other aborigines of America. Their features are good, and, were it not for the barbarous incrustation which surrounds them, might be called prepossessing. The women are stouter than the men, but inferior to them in beauty. The dress of

both consists of a robe made of marmot, or rabbit skin, tied round the neck and reaching to the knees, with a small slip of leather or cloth covering underneath. In the summer months the men dispense even with this slight covering, and wander about in a complete state of nudity. They are fond of European clothing; and such of them as were enabled to purchase a coat, trousers, and shirt, took great pride in appearing in them at the fort.

They are much addicted to gambling, and umpires are chosen to see that each party plays fairly; still their games seldom terminate without a quarrel. They will gamble their guns, robes, and even their shoes. One of them, who had been out three months on a hunting excursion, returned with a large lot of prime beaver, with which he intended to purchase a gun for himself, and other articles for his wife and children. His evil genius induced him to play; and in a short time he lost half his stock. He then desisted, and was about retiring to the fort; but in the mean time several of the gamblers collected about him, and upbraided him with want of spirit. His resolution was over-

come, and he recommenced: fortune was still unpropitious, and in less than an hour he lost the remainder of his furs. The following day he came to us with tears in his eyes, and having related his misfortune, and promised never to run so great a risk again, we gave him goods on credit to the amount of twenty beavers.

They are fond of feasting, and on particular occasions invite their friends from villages thirty or forty miles distant. When the entertainment is over, the guest has nothing more to expect; and no matter how long he may remain, there is no renewal of hospitality. Gambling is carried on to a dreadful extreme at these assemblages.

Polygamy is practised, but is not very general, few of them being able to support more than one wife. There are no marriage ceremonies. The choice of each party is left unfettered; and it frequently happens that if their tempers do not agree, the union is dissolved by mutual consent. The women are unfruitful, which may be attributed to the many laborious avocations to which they are condemned, particularly that of digging for roots; and abortions are also frequent among them.

Prostitution is notoriously practised among unmarried females, and is productive of disease to a deplorable extent. Few escape the consequences resulting from this general depravity, and many fall victims to it. Leprosy is also common among the young people of both sexes, and proceeds from the same demoralising cause. Sickness or excessive labour produces a depression of spirits among the females, many of whom while in that state commit suicide. We saw the bodies of several of these wretched beings who had hanged themselves from trees in sequestered parts of the wood.

Their doctor, or man of medicine, differs little from the same personage on the Columbia, except that the profession here is rather dangerous.

The same mode of throwing the patient on his back, beating the parts affected, singing in a loud voice to drown his cries, &c. is practised here; but in the event of his death, his relatives generally sacrifice the quack or some one of his connexions. This summary mode of punishment is admirably calculated to keep the profession free from intruders; and their medical practitioners, I am

happy to state, are becoming every day less numerous.

The affectionate regard for friends and relatives which, more or less, characterises other tribes, appears to be unknown amongst those savages. A few instances, which came under our personal knowledge, may be sufficient to prove their total want of all the finer feelings of humanity.

In December 1826 an elderly man, nearly related to the Talkotin chief, fell short of provisions, and although he was surrounded by numbers who had an abundance of dried salmon, he was actually allowed to die of starvation in the midst of plenty. The day after his death the corpse was burned, and no one seemed to mourn his loss.

One night during the same winter a young woman, nearly naked, her body covered with bruises, and dreadfully frost-bitten, came to the fort, and begged for admission. This was readily granted. She alleged she had been in a starving condition, and had asked her husband for a little dried salmon, which he refused to give, although he had plenty in his lodge; that she watched an

opportunity during his absence to take a small piece, which he discovered her in the act of eating; and that without any other cause he gave her a dreadful beating, and then turned her out, declaring she should no longer live with him. She added, that all her friends refused her assistance, and that she would have inevitably perished from the inclemency of the weather but for the protection and relief we afforded her. During her narrative her uncle entered, and, on learning the particulars, he declared he would make up the quarrel; and went away, promising to return shortly with some rabbits. With much difficulty we succeeded in restoring her to health; but neither husband, uncle, nor any other relation ever after troubled us with inquiries concerning her, and she still remains at the fort living on our bounty.

Another instance, and I shall have done:—In January 1827 two stout young men, brothers, with their wives and children, and a grey-headed, infirm old man, their father, encamped for a few days close to the fort.

Late in the evening of the second day after their departure we were surprised at seeing the

unfortunate old man crawling towards the house, and crying out piteously for "fire and salmon." His hands and feet were frost-bitten, and he was scarcely able to move. A piece of salmon and a glass of rum quickly revived him, when he told us that on that morning his sons abandoned him at the place they had slept at the night before, and, on going away, told him he might take care of himself as well as he could, as they would not any longer be encumbered with him !

These cases establish a degree of barbarism I believe unparalleled in any country ; and I know of no redeeming feature to counterbalance them. We have repeatedly afforded relief to numbers who were dying from starvation or disease, and who, but for our assistance, would have perished ; yet ingratitude is so strongly implanted in their savage nature, that these very individuals in periods of plenty have been the first to prevent us from taking a salmon ; and whenever a dispute or misunderstanding arose between our people and the natives, these scoundrels have been seen brandishing their weapons and urging their countrymen to exterminate us.

They are also incorrigible thieves and liars.

No *chevalier d'industrie* could excel them in skilful operations ; and it required our utmost vigilance to guard against their felonious propensities : while their disregard of truth is so glaring, that we have actually heard them contradict facts of which we ourselves had been eye-witnesses.

During the severity of winter they make excavations in the ground sufficiently capacious to contain a number of persons ; and in these holes they burrow until the warm weather once more permits them to venture above ground. They preserve their dry salmon rolled up in baskets of birch bark in holes of a similar description, but somewhat smaller. The smell from these subterranean dwellings while thus occupied is horribly offensive, and no white man could stand within its influence. Men, women, and children, dogs, fleas, &c. all live together in this filthy state.

It has been already mentioned that in the battle of September 1827 they killed some Chilco-
tins, and took others prisoners. Their treatment of both dead and living was in perfect accordance with their general character. After having taken

off the scalps, they raised the bodies of the deceased on stumps of trees, and exhibited them to the Atnahs, a band of whom had been specially invited to witness these trophies of their valour. One would then plunge his knife into the corpse, a second hack the skull with his axe, and a third perforate the body with arrows. Women and children equally participated in this savage amusement, and all washed their hands and faces in the blood of their victims, which they did not remove until it dried and fell off.

Among the prisoners was one woman with a child at her breast. A Talkotin ruffian instantly cut its throat, and, holding the infant on the point of his knife, asked the mother, with a degree of horrible exultation, if it "smelt good." She replied, "No." He repeated the question, but still received the same answer. Irritated at her obstinacy, he seized her violently by the neck, and asked her the third time if it "smelt good." The wretched woman, knowing that death awaited her, in the event of another refusal, at length faltered out an affirmative. "Is it very

good?" repeated the savage. "Yes," she replied, "very good;" upon which, flinging her from him, and dashing the lifeless remains of her infant on the ground, he walked away.

The war-dance next commenced; and the unfortunate prisoners were introduced into the middle of the circle, and compelled to join in the dancing and singing, while at intervals their inhuman conquerors displayed the scalps of their fathers, brothers, or husbands, and rubbing them across their faces, asked with ferocious joy if they "smelled good?"

We endeavoured to purchase some young children which were among the captives, with a view of returning them to their friends; but they refused all our offers. They, however, promised that none of them should be injured; but their habitual perfidy was manifested in this as in all their other transactions; for we learned that on the same night a child was killed, and the body burned; a few days afterwards another was thrown alive into a large fire, and consumed; and in the course of the winter our people discovered the remains of three others, with scarcely any flesh

on their bones; and we had good reason to believe they had been starved to death.

Inhumanity to prisoners, however, is a vice which these Indians practise in common with all the savage tribes of America; but in their domestic quarrels the Talkotins evince the same brutal and sanguinary disposition; a remarkable instance of which occurred in the year 1826. A young man, who had killed a rein-deer, determined to give a treat to his friends, and having concealed it, as he thought, in a place of security, proceeded to their various dwellings for the purpose of inviting them to the feast. In the interim, however, some of the tribe discovered the hidden treasure, the greater part of which they made away with. He became highly exasperated at his disappointment, and in his passion slew one man whom he found sitting at a fire broiling part of the animal. The friends of the deceased instantly armed themselves, and having surrounded the lodge in which the owner of the deer resided, butchered all his relations, amounting to seven individuals. He however escaped, and being a person of some influence, quickly collected a

number of his friends, determined on revenge; but the murderers in the mean time fled to the mountains, where they have lurked about ever since, occasionally obtaining relief by stealth either from our people, or from some of their own countrymen.

Since the battle of September 1827 the Tal-kotins have, as a measure of security, established their village within pistol-shot of our fort. They are by no means pleasant neighbours. They are in a constant state of apprehension from the Chil-cotins, and pass the nights up to two or three o'clock each morning singing, screaming, and howling in a most disagreeable manner. It is almost impossible to sleep. The slightest rustling in the branches, or the barking of a dog, turns out the whole population; and if a strange Indian appears, he is immediately magnified into a host of warriors, coming to destroy both them and the white men.

The ceremonies attending the dead are very singular, and quite peculiar to this tribe. The body of the deceased is kept nine days laid out in his lodge, and on the tenth it is burned. For this purpose a rising ground is selected, on which

are laid a number of sticks, about seven feet long, of cypress neatly split, and in the interstices is placed a quantity of gummy wood. During these operations invitations are despatched to the natives of the neighbouring villages requesting their attendance at the ceremony: when the preparations are perfected the corpse is placed on the pile, which is immediately ignited, and during the process of burning the by-standers appear to be in a high state of merriment. If a stranger happen to be present they invariably plunder him; but if that pleasure be denied them, they never separate without quarrelling among themselves. Whatever property the deceased possessed is placed about the corpse; and if he happened to be a person of consequence, his friends generally purchase a capot, a shirt, a pair of trousers, &c., which articles are also laid round the pile. If the doctor who attended him has escaped uninjured, he is obliged to be present at the ceremony, and for the last time tries his skill in restoring the defunct to animation. Failing in this, he throws on the body a piece of leather, or some other article, as a present, which in some

measure appeases the resentment of his relations, and preserves the unfortunate quack from being maltreated. During the nine days the corpse is laid out the widow of the deceased is obliged to sleep alongside it from sunset to sunrise; and from this custom there is no relaxation, even during the hottest days of summer! While the doctor is performing his last operation she must lie on the pile; and after the fire is applied to it, she cannot stir until the doctor orders her to be removed; which, however, is never done until her body is completely covered with blisters. After being placed on her legs, she is obliged to pass her hands gently through the flames, and collect some of the liquid fat which issues from the corpse, with which she is permitted to rub her face and body! When the friends of the deceased observe the sinews of the legs and arms beginning to contract, they compel the unfortunate widow to go again on the pile, and by dint of hard pressing to straighten those members.

If during her husband's lifetime she had been known to have committed any act of infidelity, or omitted administering to him savoury food, or

neglected his clothing, &c., she is now made to suffer severely for such lapses of duty by his relations, who frequently fling her on the funeral pile, from which she is dragged by her friends; and thus, between alternate scorching and cooling, she is dragged backwards and forwards until she falls into a state of insensibility.

After the process of burning the corpse has terminated the widow collects the larger bones, which she rolls up in an envelope of birch bark, and which she is obliged for some years afterwards to carry on her back! She is now considered and treated as a slave; all the laborious duties of cooking, collecting fuel, &c. devolve on her. She must obey the orders of all the women, and even of the children belonging to the village, and the slightest mistake or disobedience subjects her to the infliction of a heavy punishment. The ashes of her husband are carefully collected and deposited in a grave, which it is her duty to keep free from weeds; and should any such appear, she is obliged to root them out with her *fingers!* During this operation her husband's relatives stand by and beat her in a cruel manner

until the task is completed, or she falls a victim to their brutality. The wretched widows, to avoid this complicated cruelty, frequently commit suicide. Should she, however, linger on for three or four years, the friends of her husband agree to relieve her from her painful mourning. This is a ceremony of much consequence, and the preparations for it occupy a considerable time, generally from six to eight months. The hunters proceed to the various districts in which deer and beaver abound, and after collecting large quantities of meat and fur, return to the village. The skins are immediately bartered for guns, ammunition, clothing, trinkets, &c. Invitations are then sent to the inhabitants of the various friendly villages, and when they have all assembled the feast commences, and presents are distributed to each visitor. The object of their meeting is then explained, and the woman is brought forward, still carrying on her back the bones of her late husband, which are now removed, and placed in a carved box, which is nailed or otherwise fastened to a post twelve feet high. Her conduct as a faithful widow is next highly eulogised, and

the ceremony of her manumission is completed by one man powdering on her head the down of birds, and another pouring on it the contents of a bladder of oil ! She is then at liberty to marry again, or lead a life of single blessedness ; but few of them I believe wish to encounter the risk attending a second widowhood.

The men are condemned to a similar ordeal ; but they do not bear it with equal fortitude ; and numbers fly to distant quarters to avoid the brutal treatment which custom has established as a kind of religious rite.

Mr. M'Gillivray here concludes his remarks on the various tribes about Fraser's River by a table, which he formed from the most authentic sources of information, and which will show their relative numbers of married and unmarried men, women, &c.

| Names of Tribes. | Chiefs. | | Heads of Families. | | Married. | | Unmarried. | | | | | Children. | | Total. | Remarks. |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----|--------------------|-----|----------|--------|------------|------------|--------------|-------|--------|-----------|------|--|----------|
| | | | | | Men. | Women. | Widowers. | Young Men. | Young Women. | Boys. | Girls. | | | | |
| Those Kuz Lake. | 1 | 2 | 12 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 16 | 15 | 8 | 6 | | | 76 | This tribe hunts on the Chilcotin mountains. The lake, on the shores of which they reside, supplies the water of the north branch of West River. Sir A. Mackenzie places the latitude in 53° 4' 30" N. The Naskotins hunt with the above, but the greater number generally hunt towards Bear Lake, and the range of mountains to the N.E., where beaver is plentiful. The lands of the Talkotins are poor. They hunt chiefly about the mountains to the N.E.; but are afraid to venture far, from a dread of the Chilcotins. They are very bad hunters, and their limits are much circumscribed. The Atnahs do not bring much beaver to Alexandria, owing to the exorbitant tariff of that department, and they resort principally to the establishment at Thompson's River, where they procure better prices for their furs. | |
| Naskotins in various vil- lages. | 4 | 15 | 53 | 75 | 4 | 4 | 47 | 17 | 21 | 20 | | | 260 | | |
| Talkotins at Alexan- dria. | 2 | 2 | 30 | 36 | 8 | 6 | 34 | 16 | 17 | 15 | | | 166 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Atnahs in various vil- lages. | 4 | 20 | 100 | 142 | 1 | 19 | 91 | 50 | 43 | 40 | | | 510 | | |
| | 11 | 39 | 195 | 268 | 13 | 30 | 188 | 98 | 89 | 61 | | | 1012 | With the exception of the Atnahs, the same language is spoken in a direct line from the N.E. head of Deserter's River, in lat. 53° 30' to | |

Our census of the Chilcotins is imperfect; but we reckoned two chiefs, 52 heads of families, and 130 married men between the age of twenty and forty. Their country abounds in beaver; but we are not yet acquainted with their hunting grounds.

A P P E N D I X.

Extract of a Letter from the Interior, dated July 1829.

The intelligence from this country is by no means of a pleasant nature. The number of lives lost last winter is incredible, particularly in your old department, the Columbia.

The Company's ship, after a tolerably quick passage from England, was lost on the bar, and the entire crew, twenty-six in number, were inhumanly butchered by the Clatsops.

Your friend Ogden, in a hunting excursion, was attacked by a party of the Black-feet, who killed four of his men; and six of the people stationed at New Caledonia were murdered by the Carriers during the winter.

Two American parties, under the command of Messrs. Smith and Tulloch, were completely cut off; not a soul escaped; and property to a considerable amount fell into the hands of the savages.

These misfortunes have considerably weakened our influence with the Indians on the Columbia, whose behaviour, in consequence, has become very bold and daring, and we greatly fear the ensuing winter may be productive of more disasters.

We shall have much difficulty in filling up the appoint-

ments for that district next spring ; in fact, symptoms of rebellion have already begun to manifest themselves, and several of our gentlemen have been heard to declare, that in the event of their being nominated to the Columbia, they will retire from the service sooner than risk their lives among such sanguinary barbarians.—God speed them ! I say. Numbers of them have been long enough enjoying idleness and luxury on the east side of the mountains, and it is only fair they should experience some of our Columbian privations.—I have had my full share of them, and am therefore under no apprehensions of being ordered there in a hurry.

Extract of another Letter.

In your last you expressed a wish to know the population of the new colony at the Red River, and how they are getting on. I have not been there lately, but I enclose you the last census taken about two years ago, since which period it has scarcely increased. Besides men, women, boys, and girls, I give you a list of the most useful animals in possession of the settlers, in order that my statistics may be perfect so far as regards the animal world.

189 married men.

37 unmarried do.

193 married women and widows.

96 young women.

237 girls.

90 young men.

210 boys.

1052 souls.

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 178 houses | 33 barns. |
| 126 stables | 164 horses. |
| 87 mares | 27 bulls. |
| 295 cows | 76 oxen. |
| 147 calves | 20 swine. |
| 96 carts | 31 ploughs. |
| 39 harrows | 13 boats. |
| 173 canoes. | |

There are 672½ acres of land in a state of cultivation; 144,105 acres of prairie, and 21,901 acres of woodland. The total extent of lands measured amounts to 170,135 acres three roods.

The population would have been double the above number were it not for the falling off of the Swiss and the De Meurons,* most of whom have abandoned the colony, and proceeded to St. Louis and the banks of the Mississippi, and their places have not been supplied by any fresh arrivals from England.

*Extract of a Letter from Churchill, or Prince of Wales'
Fort, 1829.*

After spending several years among our new establishments on the north-west side of this great continent, behold me now in one of our most ancient settlements on the north-east side. Any thing in the shape of antiquity is a novelty in the *pays sauvage*; and as I know you are fond of novelty, I must give you a sketch of this redoubtable fortress. Churchill was erected in 1733, under the

* De Meuron's regiment was disbanded in Canada at the late peace, and numbers of the men proceeded to Lord Selkirk's colony at the Red River.

superintendence of Mr. James Robson, chief architect to the Hudson's Bay Company. It was well fortified with a raveline and four bastions, and the walls measure twenty-seven feet in breadth. Forty pieces of cannon were mounted on the walls: in fact the place was deemed impregnable: yet, notwithstanding all this apparent strength, it was captured by La Peyrouse, without any trouble, and nearly all rased to the ground. Had the Company's servants done their duty at the time, they might have bid defiance to any force; but *de mortuis nil*, &c. About the fort are now to be seen decayed carriages without guns, rust-eaten guns without carriages, groups of unappropriated balls of various calibre, broken down walls, and dilapidated stores. The governor's old house is the only place any way inhabitable; and even it will require immense repairs to make it tolerably tenantable. I assure you I would prefer residing in one of our snug square-built little boxes on the Columbia to this melancholy remnant of departed greatness.

The following names are cut out in large characters in the wall in front of the fort: RICHARD NORTON, 1752; GUILFORD LONG OF ROTHERHITHE, 1754; JOHN NEWTON, 1752.*

In the year 1800 Mr. Atkinson found the following inscription written in a piece of cedar wood, about a foot square and five feet above the ground, on Old Factory Island in James' Bay, about thirty miles to the northward of East Main Factory. All the letters were quite visible.

"In the year 1692 wintered three ships at this island, with one hundred and twenty-seven men, under the govern-

* Churchill is in lat. 58° 44' N., and long. 95° 30' west.

ment of Captain James Knight. Then we erected this monument in remembrance of it."

Three different tribes occasionally visit us. They belong to the Crees, Chipewyans, and Esquimaux, and we purchase from them beaver, otter, martin, red, silver, and white foxes, &c. The Crees who have visited us have never exceeded twelve men, young and old. The Chipewyans vary considerably in their numbers. From twenty to fifty occasionally come, and the total number who have visited the fort does not exceed one hundred. Our Esquimaux customers reside at and about Chesterfield Inlet. They do not muster more than one hundred and twenty full-grown men, about forty of whom visit us annually. They are all quiet, well-behaved people, and tolerably honest.

About two-thirds of our provisions consist of country produce; the remaining one-third, namely, flour and oat-meal, we procure from England. Among the former we have fresh and salt geese, partridges, venison, and fish. The geese are principally procured in the spring from the Crees and Chipewyans, and numbers are salted by our people. The latter tribe chiefly supply us with the venison, which they bring in a half-dried state, nearly a distance of seventeen days' march. During the summer season we occasionally kill a chance deer. In the winter we are well supplied with partridges, the chief part of which our men take in nets.

Our principal fish is the salmon and jack-fish: the former is taken during the summer season in nets at a place called Cuckold's Point, between two and three miles from the fort; and the jack is taken in October and November at Deer's River, distant about twenty-five miles from Churchill. Neither however is plentiful.

It was from this place that Hearne set out on his arctic ocean hunting expedition ; and as I think he says enough about the climate, soil, productions, &c. I shall not tire you by alluding to these subjects. Suffice it to say, that Churchill is a rascally, disagreeable, cold, unsocial, out-of-the-way, melancholy spot,—and I don't care how soon I am changed. No hunting, horse-racing, or any other of the sports which we enjoyed on the Columbia, which I once thought bad enough : but, talking of Indian trading posts, I may truly say, “ bad is the best.” So, wishing you all manner of good things, with plenty of *white boys*, and abundance to feed them, I remain *ton tendre ami à la mort*.
J—.

THE END.

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